Learning to Meet the 'Demands of the Day':
Towards a Weberian Philosophy of Education

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this dissertation is to propose a Weberian philosophy of education. I understand philosophy of education to be a field dedicated to reflection upon the educator's practice. My project arises from the contention that too many contemporary philosophers of education have, in the name of realism, exchanged reflection on educational practice for reflection on the political dimensions of educational institutions, thereby engaging in some variety of applied political philosophy. Treating philosophy of education as applied political philosophy demotes the significance of educational practice and thus the significance of the field itself. The central question this dissertation takes up is how philosophers of education might lend significance and priority to educational practice in a manner that does not ignore the realities of educational institutions. My argument is that a Weberian philosophy of education – a philosophy based on social theorist Max Weber's conception of education – can provoke reflection upon the ideal qualities of educational practice amidst a non-ideal and pluralistic society. A Weberian philosophy of education revives a vision of students as particular persons, prioritizes calling as an educational aim, galvanizes the dignity of the educator's cause, and points towards the responsible re-enchantment of society.

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Preface

This dissertation arises from my study of Max Weber's conception of education, which has been a paradoxical experience. Just as Weber argues in *Economy and Society* that "rational asceticism" in the West paradoxically "led to the accumulation of [the] wealth" it rejected (Weber 1978, p. 586), my initial critique of Weber's conception of education – particularly his rigid distinction between the scholar and the educator in *Science as a Vocation* – has led to an extended argument for a Weberian philosophy of education. My present reading of Weber commends the philosophical and educational aspects of his work. My assurance that this emphasis is not marginal arises from a climactic moment in Weber's lecture "Science as a Vocation" (1917). Weber states,

> Philosophy, as a specialist discipline, and the discussions, which are essentially philosophical, conducted by the individual disciplines, attempt to achieve [clarity]. We can, in this way, if we understand the matter (which must be presupposed), compel or at least help the individual to *give an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions to himself*. It seems to me that this should not be underestimated, even for the purely personal life. At this point I am also tempted to say, if a teacher succeeds in this, that he is acting in the service of "moral" forces, performing his duty to create clarity and a sense of responsibility. (Weber 2008, p. 48)

We learn from this quote that *all* specialist disciplines involve philosophical concepts and questions, and the moral purpose of *all* specialist disciplines is accomplished when philosophical concepts are taught in a manner that compels students to take an active responsibility for giving "*an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions to himself*" (Weber 2008, p. 48). If this

line is taken seriously, it is possible to read the entirety of Weber's work as pedagogical matter (cf. Fantuzzo 2015).

Of course it doesn't take long to discover that reading the entirety of Weber's work as pedagogically relevant yields no stream of insight. Attempting to find and articulate the educational significance of Weber's work, for me, has been a process of discovery punctuated by barrenness. The appropriate metaphor for reading Weber, perhaps on any subject, is mining. As Sven Eliaeson writes, "Weber's work is like a gigantic quarry with many shiny stones to pick up—many concepts and hypotheses to extend, elaborate, and transcend" (2002, p. 3).[1] It might be said that my reading of Weber seeks to locate (extend, elaborate, and transcend) the philosophical and educational aspects of his work. I approach Weber as a thinker who can illuminate the human condition from an educational perspective, who is attentive to insights into human nature, and who compels his students to reconsider the basic ethical question: "How ought I live?" (cf. Scaff 2011, p. 250) The possibility that this question finds support in Weber's work bears heavily upon my conception of a Weberian philosophy of education.

In what follows, I develop a Weberian philosophy of education in order to offer a response to the following question: How might philosophers of education lend significance to the priority of educational practice in a manner that does not ignore the realities of educational institutions and the collision of interests and values currently shaping them? I argue that reflecting upon the Weberian educator provides a promising response. The Weberian educator provokes students to take an active responsibility for ideas. She echoes the demands of particular

[1] Mining the secondary literature on Weber yields the same image in Käsler's work (1988): "The lack of system, the existing contradictions and the differing levels of precision made and still make Weber's entire oeuvre into a huge 'quarry' which could be, and indeed was, exploited, protected, wondered at and inspected" (p. 214).

ideas arising from the content she teaches, while anticipating the formative potential of these ideas upon a person's life.

Admittedly, the scope of education is vast, ranging from algebra to car repair and economics to theatre. Rather than limiting the scope or presuming competence over its range, I shall focus on unpacking the meaning of what the Weberian educator anticipates: namely, an *educated calling*. Although Weber taught specific disciplines,[2] and these disciplines will undoubtedly color what follows, a Weberian philosophy of education need not hinge upon a particular discipline's content.[3] Instead, it hinges upon the Weberian educator's relationship to students working particular ideas in a given subject and her hope that these students will take an active responsibility for the meaning of their obligations in the world as mature persons.

Educated will mean taking an active responsibility for ideas: heeding the demand of an idea to become a reality, along with heeding the voice of an educator who echoes this demand. *Calling* will mean a conception of the ultimate meaning of a person's obligations in the world. When analyzed, calling is an idea about a person's *self* as well as an idea about the *world*. To provide the skeletal version of what follows: an educated calling will be understood as an active responsibility bearing upon a person's self-examination or ideas about his self (chapter 2) in relation to an idea about the world – which I will call his *habituation* – and his task therein, which I will call his *cause* (chapter 3). The unity of these demands can be found as a person acts upon his obligations in a non-ideal and pluralistic society – which I will refer to as having an

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[2] Weber names them in "Science as Vocation" as "sociology, history, political economy and political science and those varieties of cultural philosophy whose function is to interpret them" (2008, p. 41).

[3] Throughout this dissertation I will frequently return to the example of an 8th grade algebra teacher. I do so because this is a subject, unlike history or English, which does not obviously provide moral and existential lessons.

educated calling in modern society (chapter 4). After the meaning of an educated calling has been fleshed out, I argue that the Weberian educator's cause harbors a positive social vision (chapter 5). Specifically, through her work echoing the demands of her particular students' ideas, the Weberian educator envisions a fuller conception of humanity. This conception is not borrowed from an ideal external to the educational domain (e.g., a political ideal premised upon the common good), but springs from the educator's practice. I refer to the educator's cause and this positive social vision as "responsible re-enchantment." Thus, I claim, "responsible re-enchantment" springs from the Weberian educator's everyday practice. Ultimately I hope to show that reflection upon educational practice is still quite valuable without preset political aims; a significant source of hope and noble aspiration springs from the Weberian educator's practice as she attends to students as particular persons.

Chapter 1
"Learning to Meet the Demands of the Day"

1.1 A Fundamental Obligation

Imagine two parents engaging in an argument about the best way to parent. The argument becomes heated, interests collide, the norms of family life appear to be on the line. Imagine further that this argument occurs in the presence of their children. So imagined, an irony of this argument is that it is simultaneously an act of parenting. As the children listen to their parents argue, they are being "parented" as it were by the collision of parental interests. If both parents were to watch a video recording of their argument and reflect upon their children's reactions, the contradiction would likely become quite clear. Both parents would see that despite the importance of their values or strengths of their interests at the time, they could have been arguing more responsibly, because their argument about parenting neglected the practice of parenting – and thus their children suffered. Such arguments between parents happen every day, of course, and perhaps they are an unavoidable part of a modern upbringing. But, upon reflection, they should not happen; children should not be raised by the collision of parental interests. Put positively, the practice of parenting ought to take priority over the politics of parenting. We might call this a *fundamental obligation* of parenting. It is fundamental because affirming it is essential to a more substantial conception of parenting. It is not merely an externally given obligation, like a traffic law, because it bears the qualities of an ideal, that is, an image of excellence that motivates parents to attend to the practice of parenting (in a variety of situations) and set their more specific goals and orient their daily decisions accordingly.[4] The task of this dissertation is not to reflect upon a fundamental obligation of parenting, but to explore its educational counterpart. Does an analogous obligation arise in the educational practice—when

[4] Here I am borrowing language from De Ruyter (2003).

this term is taken as basic, as it will be throughout this dissertation, and constituted by the tasks we commonly think of educators engaged in when they are working for students?

Intuitively, the answer is yes. Those who will read this dissertation would likely agree that students should not be subject to the collision of interests and values that impinge upon educational institutions unless they are first prepared to understand the issues at stake or unless stakeholders dispute with instructive intentions. To think otherwise would not be to think about educating students, but rather about subjecting them to a careless form of socialization, where, for instance, the person in the room with the loudest voice or the philanthropist in the room with the most money would arbitrarily determine the course of their education. This seems wrong, at least from our current social and historical vantage point. Perhaps this is the case because educational practice in modern society should not be reducible to mere socialization (e.g., adjusting students to the most dominant social interests or the most persuasive social values), because contemporary educational practice recognizes an obligation to cultivate independent thinking in students, that is, a disposition to understand and take responsibility for the course of their lives in a modern, pluralistic society. For, in such a society, a person's obligations and values are not inherited at birth; a burden is placed upon persons to decide the course of their lives in light of its demands, possibilities, and limitations. An educator can play an important role in helping students to understand and take up this burden. And, given the challenge of thinking independently about one's life in modern society— whether this involves a career choice, political participation, or religious affiliation, many would agree that an educator (one way or another) is fundamentally obligated to do so.[5] This is to say, many would agree that the practice of education ought to be something more than mere socialization and that educational practice

[5] For sophisticated articulations of the value of autonomy from liberal political philosophers see Callan 1997 and Levinson 2002.

ought to take priority over the colliding interests that impinge upon educational policy and the everyday politics of school life.

Despite the intuitive appeal of this educational obligation, at least from our social and historical vantage point, it is difficult to take responsibility for it in practice. The ideal quality of this fundamental educational obligation seems necessarily compromised amidst the realities of modern educational institutions. Teachers in all educational institutions have very likely experienced the frustration of having their educational practice obstructed by a parent's complaint, institutional policy, or administrator's whim. Such occurrences are common; so common, in fact that they may be chalked up as a necessary evil of schooling.

Of course, the frequency and variety of these occurrences varies from place to place. Teachers working at small, affluent private schools may less often feel the brunt of institutional regulations, though they may feel unduly subject to the demands of educational competitions and the necessity of victory that justifies their school's status and price tag (cf. Khan 2012). Public school teachers, on the other hand, may duck the demands of frenzied educational competitions and paying parents but more often feel obstructed by institutional regulations. This occurs, at its worst, in the form of clumsy accountability schemes and punitive oversight that leads to what one scholar has aptly called "demoralization" (cf. Santoro 2011).

Whether facing the particular demands of paying parents or the agenda of mass educational reform, the need for teachers to push back on educational interests in the name of educational practice is easier said than done. Teachers who shirk the external demands of their institutions risk putting their livelihood on the line or (less obviously) risk engaging in a political dispute that can also distract attention from the priority of educational practice. So, it is difficult to take responsibility for the priority of educational practice when educators suffer from a lack of

professional autonomy (cf. Metha 2013). The present state of affairs feels grim, for the realities of educational institutions, from Pre-K to college, seem geared to provoke fear and the interests of self-preservation rather than an image of excellence that motivates educators to attend first and foremost to educational practice and set their more specific goals and orient their daily decisions accordingly. Amidst the realities of educational institutions, and the host of conflicting imperatives to educate, can reflection on the fundamental obligation that the educator has to the students make a difference?

1.2 Motivation

This dissertation arises from the conviction that contemporary philosophers of education need to reflect upon educational practice realistically. If philosophers of education have the time and profess a capacity to reflect upon education and seek to inform educational practice, then they ought to strive to better understand and elevate its priority, because this fundamental obligation seems to lack substance and force in today's educational climate.

Of course, in an educational climate where the field of philosophy of education is experiencing a global decline in university teaching positions (Alexander 2015, p. 1), it may be a stretch to claim that philosophers of education bear any special responsibility for the fate of anything. A likely reason for the decline in positions is that schools of education are moving towards methodically equipping future teachers for the realities of educational practice and thus further away from speculative inquiry. Thus, in a state of decline, a fair question to ask is: How can a small group of scholars be blamed for anything they attend to or neglect when so few care to listen? I am not in a position to comment on this problem at a general level, but I am hesitant to join exculpatory efforts, because a surprising amount of work being done in the field of contemporary philosophy of education does not prioritize educational practice.

1.3 The Norm of Institutional Realism

The field of philosophy of education represents a diversity of perspectives, but at present it is governed by what I shall call a "norm of institutional realism." The basic tenet of institutional realism is that tough-minded and significant philosophy of education involves taking a stand on the state and direction of educational institutions; philosophers of education should not be too idealistic, utopian, or "airy fairy;"[6] they should engage the real crises and politics of educational institutions. To echo contemporary political philosopher Raymond Geuss, they should not avoid hard questions like: "Who does what to whom for whose benefit?" (cf. Geuss 2008, p. 25). Philosophers of education will be significant (put crudely: worth listening to) if they can identify new crises, much like the news, or contribute to the transformation of educational institutions, much like political decision makers or activists. Now, thinking realistically about the priority of educational practice *does* involve acknowledging institutional realities. How could it not? Yet the norm of institutional realism bids philosophers of education to prioritize reflection on educational politics and thus subtly undermines the priority of educational practice. The agents who make political decisions to reform or revolutionize educational institutions have become of paramount concern.

Adherence to the norm of institutional realism is prominent in two dominant yet wholly opposed camps in the field of philosophy of education. Despite their different approaches, both camps move away from prioritizing educational practice by collapsing the distinction between educational practice and educational politics. As the point of difference between these camps is most conspicuous in their stance on educational institutions, I type these camps as "institutional adjusters" and "institutional resisters."

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[6] Thanks to Ben Raikes for suggesting this term during a class session (Fall 2015).

Institutional Adjusters 1.3.1

Institutional adjusters engage in normative reflection and argument about educational institutions. For institutional adjusters, educational institutions are the common denominator of educational practice; they unavoidably govern its practice and determine its meaning. As these institutions originate from and can only be legally changed through political decisions, the task of "good" philosophy pertaining to education, according to institutional adjusters, is to engage in applied political philosophy and to offer normative guidance to educational policymakers (Brighouse 2002, p. 181). The work of good philosophy of education thus involves taking a realistic perspective, where a realistic perspective is understood as the perspective of present day educational decision makers. Sensitive to the perspective of elites whose decisions carry the most weight in the real-world alteration of educational institutions, institutional adjusters modestly opt to serve as the "under-laborers" of social scientists and educational decision makers (Schouten and Brighouse 2015, p. 5).[7]

Although the nature of the philosophical guidance offered by institutional adjusters has changed, their variety of institutional realism and relationship to prevailing powers has a conspicuous history in the 'Mirror of Princes' (*speculum principum*) tradition and other politico-educational treatises. Amélie Rorty goes so far as to observe: "Since educational policy is formulated by those who counsel the rulers who apply and implement it, the philosophy of education is typically addressed to rulers and their counselors" (1998, p. 2). The "rulers"

[7] The use of the term "under-laborer," as an intellectual laborer, was coined by John Locke. Peter Winch provides a helpful history and rebuttal of this conception in ch. 1.2 of *The Idea of Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (2008). Although Schouten and Brighouse's article aspires to be introductory, they neglect describing the origin of the term. That is, while they say that philosophers of education should be "under-laborers" to social scientists and policy makers, it is unclear whether this is an ode to Locke, a cryptic jab at Winch, or perhaps a reference to the British philosopher of education R.S. Peters. The aspirational image of an under-laborer is not self evident to the uninitiated. Admittedly, this is a minor concern. Yet I find it telling.

decisions, in other words, are the efficient cause of educational institutions and their practices. Institutional adjusters thus would deem it unrealistic or idle to entertain thoughts about the practice of education prior to the realities of educational institutions and their present governance. Education is organized through institutions. If these institutions are to be improved, political decisions must be made. Philosophers of education can help decision-makers organize institutions better, and thus play a significant role in contributing to their decisions. This happens, by necessity, prior to educational practice. Thus philosophers of education who are concerned with educational practice are most effectively employed as under-laborers for those with the power to make educational decisions.

1.3.2 Institutional Resisters

Institutional resisters balk at this conclusion. Their work reflects on how the practice of education can resist the (present) governance of educational institutions. The modes of resistance take on a variety of forms. The clearest and most pronounced form today is that taken by critical pedagogues. If institutional adjusters aspire to serve the present educational decision-makers, critical pedagogues aspire to serve (or, less modestly, simply be) political activists. Critical pedagogue Shirley Steinberg goes far in capturing the spirit of institutional resisters: "Critical pedagogy isn't talk—liberals talk. Critical pedagogy takes language from the radicals—radicals *must* do" (xi). Here realism is akin to "not selling out" and confronting the present powers governing schools.

Contra Amélie Rorty's observation, I think that the most vital and interesting work done in philosophy of education does not reside with the rather bland and unsurprising moral audits made by institutional adjusters, but rather with the bold visions of institutional resisters and their

ancestors.[8] While institutional resisters do not serve the present powers, they also do not engage in unrealistic, apolitical thinking. Far from it, they advance political education by devising an education for those who will become *better* rulers and counselors—students who will, one way or another, transform the present society because of their visionary educators (cf. Counts 1978). Institutional resisters, in short, explain why *educators* and the truly *educated* will be the efficient cause of the present ruler's replacement. The justification for this conception of educational practice is that politics should be carried out by the better educated. This can, but need not, imply elitism,[9] but it always implies a sharp challenge to prevailing powers through the educator, cast here as subversive political agent number one.

Both camps offer valuable perspectives, particularly when read in light of their forebears. But my grievance at present is that neither camp reflects upon the priority of educational practice as an ideal that can (and does) arise amidst educational institutions. Institutional adjusters treat the practice of education as just that: a process of institutional adjustment. The priority of educational practice is neglected to accommodate managerial reasonableness. What the practice of education can accomplish is confined to what decision-makers, at present, can really accomplish. Consequently, the good philosopher of education fulfills his responsibility to

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[8] Consider Plato's *Republic* and Rousseau's *Emile.* Although these works were written prior to mass schooling, they shed light on the intentions of institutional resisters. However, they might be better classed, at least in these works, as institutional escapists. Both authors imaginatively prioritize the practice of education over the educational politics of the time. For instance, Plato imagines a state which begins the task of education by first dismissing all of the parents, so that the practice of education will not be affected by misguided interests. Rousseau imagines the childhood education of his (bourgeois) pupil, Emile, proceeding in a rural context far removed from the corrupting mores of Parisian society.

[9] Consider Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* which is certainly not addressed to the rulers and councilors of his day; it seeks to realize a form of politics beyond existing "banking models of education"; although, as David Backer pointed out to me, Freire's language can be quite elite too.

educators when he helps them take the perspective of decision-makers, and helps them to think about questions of educational policy or justice as if they were those with the power and wisdom to adjust educational institutions. On the other hand, institutional resisters conceive of the practice of education as a process of revolution. The practice of education is motivated by cries of revolt, and becomes synonymous with political action. Philosophers of education fulfill their duty when they persuade teachers that true education is a form of protest or militancy against the oppressive powers governing educational institutions.

1.4 The Problem with the Norm of Institutional Realism

My general grievance against the norm of institutional realism, as exemplified by these specific manifestations, is that it leads philosophers of education away from reflecting on the fundamental obligation to prioritize the practice of education. This obligation is not imaginary, but is felt by decent educators on a daily basis. Despite and given the power of educational decision-makers, despite and given the need for revolution, educators feel and fulfill the obligation to prioritize the practice of education amidst educational institutions. Fully aware that educational institutions are shaped by a host of colliding interests and values, teachers who prioritize educational practice affirm that none of these interests or values should shape students, that is, if they are not filtered through educational practice and presented in a manner that allows students to think independently about them. While the implicit message of the norm of institutional realism is that it is better *not* to be an educator today—for educational practice is not where elite decisions or momentous political action is to be found—this dissertation is motivated by the sense that philosophical reflection on the fundamental obligation of education is not a lost cause but a relevant task for philosopher of education. More specifically, there is a need to reflect upon the obligation to prioritize educational practice, and there is a need to recall its ideal

qualities: an image of excellence that can motivate educators to attend to the practice of education and set their more specific goals and orient their daily decisions accordingly.[10] But, affirming the principle that stimulates the norm of institutional realism, the challenge is to do so realistically. How might philosophers of education lend significance to the priority of educational practice in a manner that does not ignore the realities of educational institutions and the collision of interests and values currently shaping them?

1.5 Thesis

The general claim of this dissertation is that philosophers of education can most usefully reflect upon the priority of educational practice when they do so realistically, that is, *despite* and *given* contemporary educational institutions and their situation in a non-ideal and pluralistic society. Although educational institutions are shaped by a host of colliding social interests and values, the intuition informing the priority of educational practice expresses the demand that none of these interests or values should shape students if they are not taught in a manner that allows students to think independently about them. The specific argument of this dissertation is that Max Weber's conception of education provides support for this general claim. Although, at first glance, Weber's conception of education amounts to scattered and passing remarks made by a "classical" sociologist,[11] I show that Weber's conception of education has the resources for a comprehensive educational vision and deserves to be taken seriously today. I reconstruct Weber's conception of education as a philosophy of education in order to demonstrate a realistic reflection on the ideal qualities of the obligation to prioritize educational practice. By philosophy

[10] Again, here I am borrowing language from De Ruyter (2003).

[11] I find the designation "classical sociologist" to be ridiculous and symptomatic of a field's insecurity. Sociologists should acknowledge (and teach) Plato and Thucydides as classical social theorists. Start there and Weber is no longer a "classical" figure, but a late figure in a long line of inquiry.

of education, in what follows, I will mean a general account of the understanding sought and conveyed by the educator through her practice. By a *realistic* philosophy of education I mean said account situated and worked out within a non-ideal and pluralistic society.[12] Thus, my argument is that a Weberian philosophy of education can provide a means for reflecting upon the ideal qualities of the fundamental obligation to prioritize educational practice—what shall be shortly introduced as an *educated calling*—and do so in a realistic manner. To be clear, the aim of this dissertation is not to wholly exclude concerns about reforming educational institutions, but rather to *subject* these concerns to the priority of educational practice and see them through the educator's eyes.

1.5.1 Max Weber?

The use of Max Weber, in spite of a preemptive sketch, should raise questions. To start, for those who are wholly unfamiliar with the name, who is Max Weber? Next why does Max Weber—the tough-minded, value-free sociologist or the passionate, and at times fanatical, German nationalist—have anything to do with educational ideals and the philosophy of education?

To respond to the first question, Max Weber (1864-1920) was an astounding German intellectual who, during his lifetime, produced groundbreaking work in a number of disciplines: social science, history, organizational studies, political science, music theory, and Russian studies.[13] Weber is perhaps best known from his sociological study *The Protestant Ethic and the*

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[12] This definition derives from Peter Winch's important work *The Idea of Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy,* specifically, from the following line: …the philosophy of science will be concerned with the kind of understanding sought and conveyed by the scientist; the philosophy of religion will be concerned with the way in which religion attempts to present an intelligible picture of the world, and so on." (1969, p. 18).

Spirit of Capitalism. Yet the more his work is studied, the more apparent becomes Weber's influence on the social sciences, the humanities, and popular culture. Weber was also politically involved, and sometime questionably so.[14] His commitment to impartial scholarship and highly partial political purposes means that Weber can appear in scholarship to be a bipolar figure. On the one hand, as a cool-tempered, rationalistic intellectual who lived to disenchant existence; on the other hand, as a hot-tempered fanatic who had no confidence in reason and engaged in political conflict through the arbitrary force of conviction alone. Although the primary purpose of this dissertation is not to engage in the history of ideas, I hope to advance a charitable portrait of Weber as not simply a cool scholar or heated political advocate, but, combining the distance and urgency of these extremes, as a peculiar moral educator who provoked his students and continues to provoke his readers to raise the question "How ought I live?"[15] A snapshot of my reading of Weber as an educator is captured by French Sociologist Raymond Aaron's observation: "Weber's originality and greatness consist first of all in the fact that he was, and aimed at being, a politician and a thinker at the same time, or more precisely that he both separated and united politics and science" (1957, p. 67). My charitable portrait of Weber – only a snapshot at this point – depicts an educator who combined extremes without reconciliation and offered paradoxes without consolation in order to provoke independent thinking.

Yet Weber's significance as a moral educator is far from obvious. First, Weber explicitly insists that an educator (employed in modern institutions) should not be a "sage" or "philosopher," offering students and readers advice on the meaning of the world (cf. Weber

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[13] An excellent way to become acquainted with Weber's work and the voluminous secondary literature on it is to read through Alan Sica's exceedingly helpful bibliography (2012).

[14] See Mommsen (1984), Goldman (1992), and Radkau (2011).

[15] Cf. Scaff 2011; Derman 2012a, 2012b.

2008, p. 48). Secondly, Weber's conception of education has had a negligible impact on educational scholarship and remains largely unknown to philosophers of education.[16] This is

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[16] Indeed, Weber is not a focal thinker in books and journals devoted to philosophy of education; to my knowledge, over the past 20 years, there have been no books or special journal editions devoted to Weber's work. Although Weber's name is dropped often enough to establish the assumption that Weber's work should be familiar to readers, the field at large does little to contribute to this assumption. The many particular authors who mention Weber in passing are not at fault, but the field as a whole is weakened for presuming, but never demonstrating, knowledge of Weber's work. Suffice it to say, when gathered together, the bits and pieces referencing Weber invite a comprehensive inquiry—if only to fill a historical gap.

Beginning at the most superficial level, we find Weber referenced within quotations. For instance, Marianna Papastephanou (2001, 2004) quotes Foucault, who cites Weber (among others) as a philosophical author who considers the "ontology of the present"; and Kathleen Knight Abowitz quotes Cornell West, who recounts his use of Weber when engaging in "abstract reflection." (from West 1993, p. 98, quoted in Abowitz 2002, p. 291). Neither Papastephanou nor Abowitz opt to explain why Weber is influential. This is their prerogative. However, if these social philosophers are influencing educational theory heavily, then there are good historical reasons to wonder what Weber said about education and the extent to which Weber is a fount of contemporary educational theory, as Robbie Mclintock once helpfully suggested to me.

Still superficially, though a bit less so, we learn that Weber provided things like an influential definition of power (Baez 2000, p. 337), a significant critique of capitalism (Norris 2006, p. 461), and bleak images of an instrumental age (Higgins 2011, p. 451-454). None of these contributions are developed at length; and nowhere in the field (including encyclopedias of philosophy and education that include Marx and Durkheim but not Weber) are they even briefly mentioned on the same page.

More substantially, there are two recent book chapters that examine Weber's relationship to educational theory, Philip Wexler's *Social Theory in Education: A Primer* (2009) and Philipp Gonon's *Georg Kerschensteiner between Dewey Simmel and Weber* (2011). Wexler's chapter on Weber is intended to be "a primer," and finds reason to be colloquial at times. However, Wexler's chapter does succeed in highlighting relevant passages in Weber's work relating to education, noting that "...there is no tradition of thinking [about] education socially with Weber's ideas intentionally in mind..." (p. 97) and lamenting this fact since Weber's work does have something to offer. Since the publication of *Social Theory in Education,* Wexler has written more about Weber's conception of pedagogy—most notably in "Democracy and Education in Post-secular Society" (Fischer, Hotham, and Wexler, 2012). This article concludes with the suggestive claim that in Weber's pedagogy we find "the social, cultural, and religious interweaving of [social] spheres" (p. 263).

Gonon's chapter on Weber provides a careful and accurate exposition of "Science as a Vocation." Gonon turns to Weber partly for historical reasons, because the subject of his book, pedagogue Georg Kerschensteiner, was commissioned by the University of Munich (c.a. 1918) to give a lecture on vocations between Weber's lectures "Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation." (Incidentally, Kerschensteiner's lecture was called "Education as a Vocation.") But

likely the case because, thirdly, Weber was introduced to Anglo-American readers as a dyed-in-the-wool sociologist.[17] So while Weber discusses education in several of his writings, and a few of the most distinguished Weberian scholars have recognized the broader educational significance of his work,[18] because Weber's remarks on education were never developed into a "full-fledged" sociology of education (Swedenberg 2005, p. 18) they have been generally ignored or caricatured. Weber's work (*qua* value-free sociologist) is commonly introduced as a convenient foil in efforts to develop arguments about moral theory, educational ideals, or the

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Gonon does not focus directly on Weber. Moreover, Gonnon does not take any interpretative risks in his reading of Weber's "Science as a Vocation." Gonon summarizes passages from Weber's lecture "Science as a Vocation" (1917), which pertain to education and are critical for my argument. By sticking so closely to the letter of Weber's subtle lecture, I think Gonon neglects its depth and potential.

To my knowledge, the most substantial recent work in educational theory that explicitly uses Weber's social theory comes from Martyn Hammersely's article "Philosophy's Contribution to Social Science Research on Education" (2006). Hammersley argues that the Weberian distinction between value-relevance and value-neutrality (which I use interchangeably with "value freedom") can help us to determine philosophy's role in social sciences. Instead of endorsing a methodology-as-technique (or a supposedly value-free positivism) or methodology-as-philosophy (a theory-laden constructivism, which wrongly equates the failures of positivism with the failure of science), Weber's concept of value-relevance, says Hammersley, invites philosophers to clarify the values underlying predominant educational concepts. I appreciate the move Hammersley makes, but think it finds finds greater sophistication in a book called *Philosophy in Social Science Research* (Keat and Urry 1971); this text, written by a philosopher and a sociologist, is an enduring exposition of the philosophy of science called "critical realism." Unfortunately, Hammersley does not reference it or its school of thought; this is unfortunate because Keat and Urry do a better job of making the same general point.

It is worth noting that Weber is used in educational research that locates itself close to the border of educational theory: for instance, Eugenie Samier's work on Weber and the theory of educational administration (2002a, 2002b) and Jal Mehta's (2013) book, which uses Weber's concept of "rationalization" to explain why teachers lack professional autonomy. I will return to Mehta's work in chapter 5 of this dissertation. To conclude this extended footnote, if the goal is to learn about Weber's pedagogical ideal, the point of this section is that educational theory, at present, is the wrong place to look.

[17] Scaff 1991

[18] The major contributors here are Marianne Weber (1975), Karl Jaspers (1989) Lawrence Scaff (1977), Harvey Goldman (1992), Wilhelm Hennis (2000), and Fritz Ringer (2010), and perhaps Perry Myers (2004).

academic vocation.[19] Thus the assertion that Weber's conception of education can prompt needed reflection on the ideal qualities of educational practice should be surprising, and the claim that Weber's conception of education supplies the resources for sustaining a philosophy of education may be more surprising still. Yet this is what I set out to accomplish. Although I will frequently put Weber's concerns into conversation with other thinkers to evoke, clarify, and critique Weber's positions, the subtitle of this dissertation is "Towards a Weberian Philosophy of Education" because Weber (as an educator) is its intellectual center of gravity.

1.6 Backtracking to Move Forward with Weber

Prior to discussing the fundamental tenet of a Weberian philosophy of education, I will demonstrate how Weber's social theory bears upon the employees of educational institutions, and the two camps in the field of philosophy of education. The purpose of this indirect path is threefold. First, I aim to provide readers who are unfamiliar with Weber's work with a sense of the relevance and acuity of his sociological descriptions. Secondly, I aim to demonstrate for readers more familiar with Weber's work that his descriptive sociology does not oppose, but rather begs, philosophical reflection about educational practice. Thirdly, this indirect path will lead to two puzzles about Weber's conception of education: (a) the source of the educator's charisma and (b) how the Weberian educator who teaches a particular subject and does not play the role of a "life coach" compels students to think independently about something so grandiose as the ultimate meaning of their lives. My response to these puzzles will launch the argument.

1.6.1 Particular Persons Amidst Educational Institutions

Above I claimed that teachers experience difficulty prioritizing educational practice because their work occurs in educational institutions where educational practice is buffeted by

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[19] cf. Wolff (1970), Schwehn (1993), Karp (2012), Gorski (2013).

arbitrary social pressures and obstructed by clumsy institutional policies. An example of this might be a week of compulsory testing that serves state interests and the justification of a particular political policy, but has little educational value in its own right. The obstruction of educational practice, in this case and others, may be chalked up as a necessary evil of working at schools, particularly public schools. But what is the nature and cause of the educator's frustration? Perhaps it arises from the average teacher's mediocrity and dismay at being revealed as incompetent. This is possible, especially from the perspective of educational decision-makers who seek to shake up school culture and execute rapid reforms. However, Weber's study of the bureaucracy provides an alternative explanation, an explanation that accounts for the educator's frustration as a problem internal to the relationship between educational practice and educational institutions.

Weber understood bureaucracy to be a type of social organization that inculcates a duty to "*impersonal* and *functional* purposes" and does so through, as he describes it, "…a system of rational rules, oriented toward the satisfaction of calculable needs with ordinary, everyday means" (Weber 1978, p. 959, p. 1111). When employees of a bureaucracy fulfill their impersonal and functional purposes, they reap the rewards that the system bestows. Employees are provided with goods like a safe (or efficiently policed) environment, a stable income, opportunities for advancement, and professional status. Given the stability and rewards of bureaucratic governance, not to perform a given function at work, not to follow the rules, and not to be paid becomes a highly unreasonable course of action; reasonableness becomes the governing norm. Adjusting to bureaucratic institutions, as Weber observed, inculcates a matter-of-fact or by-the-book disposition.

It is not difficult to illustrate the bureaucratic nature of contemporary educational institutions in the United States. For instance, an 8th grade math teacher in an American public school has an occupational duty to impart skills that will allow students to demonstrate proficiency in Algebra I. At the end of the year, tests are given to measure whether, and to what extent, the teacher has fulfilled this duty. If fulfilled, the teacher can expect a stable salary, health care benefits, promotional opportunities, and the generally benign social status of being a competent teacher. If unfulfilled, the teacher ought to be sanctioned and, if worse comes to worst, fired. The decision to fire the teacher, here, is never a personal matter. It proceeds from the application of a general rule: schools should only employ functioning employees, where "functioning" is defined by experts who design institutional policies and prescribe best practices that teachers are required to regard as given and implement daily.

Weber acknowledged the effectiveness and precision of bureaucracy as an instrument of social organization—in fact, he deemed it a *necessary* instrument for sustaining the material standards of everyday life in modern society—but he also emphasized the inhumane and restrictive aspects of bureaucracy. Bureaucracies are designed to externally coerce any action that runs counter to the rules. Bureaucracies demand, as Weber observed, "…a discharge of business according to *calculable rules* and 'without regard to persons.'" So, the employee who confronts an exceptional problem demanding individual initiative is liable to feel stuck if her way forward is obstructed by existing policies. The employee who acts against these policies and calls attention to exceptional problems can be made to feel, even if her actions were entirely justified, as if she were violating the bureaucratic norm of matter-of-factness and being excessively emotive. In these unfortunate cases, an employee is liable to find herself unable to "squirm out of the apparatus into which [s]he has been harnessed...[like] a small cog in a

ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to h[er] an essentially *fixed* route of march" (emphasis added, Weber 1978, p. 988). In sum, a person's well-intentioned initiative to engage in actions deemed non-functional is liable to be shut down or oppressively handled by educational institutions organized bureaucratically.

From an educational decision-maker's standpoint, critique of the oppressive nature of school policy sounds unreasonable, and for good reason. Is an 8th grade algebra teacher actually "harnessed" to teaching the curriculum? Is not teaching algebra, as assigned, simply the job? Should this teacher be given the latitude, say, to teach interpretive dance instead of math? Moreover, so long as a math teacher fulfills her occupational duties, does she not have quite a bit of wiggle room to personalize her classroom and spice up the material with something cultural or student-centered? What then is the problem, exactly?

The problem experienced by many teachers is that the practice of education only becomes intelligible insofar as it proceeds *with* regards to persons – namely, their particular students. Many teachers do not take themselves to be fulfilling a mere occupational duty or functional purpose; they are not merely transmitting skills to test takers in order to justify their salary and meet institutional benchmarks. Instead, many teachers teach for moral and existential reasons. The practice of education becomes intelligible for these teachers according to an educational ideal. These teachers strive to work *for* their students—particular persons—who are, at times, utterly exceptional and wholly inimitable, and, at other times, tedious, lazy, and distracted. How particular students take up a lesson—whether and how it motivates, transforms, and awakens them—is the challenge, mystery, and grace of educational practice.[20]

[20] Andrew Delbanco provides a helpful illustration of "grace" in educational practice in his book *College: What it was, Is, and Should be* (2012). Because most of his students do not come from a religious background, they do not understand the term. To convey its meaning, Delbanco asks

To be sure, these extraordinary moments of educational practice can be carefully studied by experts and subjected to quantification; "best practices" and "teaching methods" can be coined; new studies can be written and sold to initiate future teachers; and, eventually, better educational policies can be decided upon and these practices can then be enforced as commonsense. Yet inevitably, hints Weber's analysis of bureaucracy, something highly personal and particular is always lost when the study of educational practice results in another (impersonal) rule for educational institutions. If the practice of education conveys something highly personal and extraordinary, then it is perhaps little wonder that educators, who work *for* their students and thus strive to prioritize educational practice above admission to an elite school or standardized tests results, can be demoralized by the ever "reasonable" rules governing educational institutions and the administrators paid to enforce their implementation (cf. Higgins 2011).

To express the matter using another Weberian term, the bureaucratic nature of educational institutions *collides* with what Weber called the charismatic aspect of educational practice, that is, its "highly individual quality" (Weber 1978, p. 1113). Bureaucratic institutions expect employees to conform to an institution through a system of external rules, whereas charisma, as Weber defines the term, "rests on the belief in revelation and heroes, upon the conviction that certain manifestations—whether they be religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political or other kinds—are important and valuable…*Charismatic belief revolutionizes men*

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them to imagine two students who attend a production of *King Lear*. The first student is unmoved, while the second student has a transformational experience. Despite witnessing the same play and even having the same SAT scores, there is a profound difference between their experiences. As Delbanco writes, "The difference between them is immeasurable by any testing instrument, and has nothing to do with which one has studied harder for tomorrow's exam on Elizabethan drama. While most of us who work in education today have no language to account for this mystery, that does not mean the mystery does not exist" (p. 48).

'from within''"(emphasis added, Weber 1978, p. 1116). The teacher who prioritizes educational practice over the institutional order seems to be engaged in a charismatic endeavor. She does not teach students just to score points, but with the hopes of revolutionizing them from within. If this prospect were off the table, if education did not involve a relationship with particular students and a concern for their formation, one might conclude that education would be a profession lacking motivation and dignity. Educators would simply be inefficient computers.

Of course the mere suggestion of a "charismatic" educator raises red flags. It is unclear why charismatic educators and their personal projects have a place in modern, educational institutions. Educators, in particular, should not be above the rule of law. It is unclear why the public should have to pay teachers who manipulate students' internal commitments and impose private values upon them. And, it is unclear if it is even worthwhile to reflect upon charismatic education— given its unreasonableness and how unrealistic its authority must seem in a institution organized bureaucratically.

These worries become clearer by examining the way the term charisma is used today. Although Weber's work went far in popularizing the term, charisma has been coopted by organizational and leadership studies to denote techniques used to lure others to unwittingly follow one's own designs; charisma has been boiled down to learned behavior strategies for producing a powerful presence or "personal magnetism" (cf. Cabrane 2013). Understood this way, charismatic educators do not prioritize educational practice. They do not teach their "personal magnetism," but enact it. So, along with shirking an impersonal rule of law, charismatic educators teach in a manner that violates the intuitive idea that education should equip students to think independently about their lives, since what persons will become in modern society is not inherited at birth. Charismatic educators do not teach independent

thinking; essentially they control others along a course constituted by *their* designs. Furthermore, there is nothing to say these designs are not simply their arbitrary preferences. Indeed, as charisma coach Olivia Cabrane beckons readers: "Charismatic people seem to lived charmed lives: they have more romantic options, they make more money, and they experience less stress" (2013, p. 2).[21] Charismatic educators, in short, maximize their preferences in predictable ways.

For those aware of Weber's work, it is a well-known and controversial fact that he outlined the nature of a charismatic political leader in his lecture "Politics as a Vocation" (1919). The charismatic political leader's purpose, as Weber understood it, is not bureaucratic impartiality and the norm of reasonableness, but neither is it governed by preferences and vanity; it is set by passion and personal responsibility for a cause. Responsibility for a cause, as Weber wrote, is the "guiding star" of the charismatic politician's actions (Weber 2008, p. 193). He is not simply seeking to satisfy his interests, but his ideals. As German political theorist Marcus Llanaque perceptively observes:

> Interests motivate the wish to be powerful, ideals motivate the wish to be responsible. Weber wants to unite responsible for ideal and accountability for deeds. Responsibility refers to a "cause" or political aim, something a professional politicians feels obligated to do. (2007, p. 492).

The charismatic politician is motivated to be responsible and ascribes to what Weber called an 'ethic of responsibility,' which holds, as Bradley Starr describes, that distinct values spheres are "loosed from any mooring in an overarching hierarchy," and yet does so without diminishing ethical demands; the cost of value conflicts in action—for instance, the costs of being a politician

[21] I encountered Cabrane's book while at Kinkos waiting for an earlier draft of this dissertation to print. For those who are curious, some quick strategies for boosting charisma are: (1) lowering the intonation of one's voice at the end of a sentence; (2) reducing how quickly and how often one nods; (3) pausing for two full seconds before speaking (p. 10).

instead of, say, a saint—must still be shouldered by the actor (1999, p. 426).[22] Weber's charismatic politician proceeds with the great ethical seriousness and would not solicit a charisma coach.[23]

From this we can infer that if Weber's political conception of the charismatic leader were applied to educational practice, the purpose would not be for the educator to achieve "personal magnetism," but rather for the ardency of a teacher's *personal* cause to inspire a group of otherwise uncaring and disenchanted students. The Weberian educator would be an inspired teacher: a spring of inspiration in a dismal institution, much like the characters captured in films like *Dead Poet's Society* and *Dangerous Minds.* Yet Weber did not take the educator to be either a charismatic politician or a bureaucratic employee administering the requisite dosage of information. Weber understood the educator in different and rather puzzling ways. Prior to turning to these puzzles, I will complete my indirect path by explaining how the concepts just introduced can be used to diagnose problems in the field of philosophy of education.

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[22] In *Politics As A Vocation* Weber distinguishes an 'ethic of responsibly' from an 'ethic of conviction.' An ethic of conviction, as Starr argues, is premised upon the belief in an "ethically rational cosmos" where "moral guidance is to be sought and found in an overarching rationality in which values are given their proper location in the unity of things" (Starr 1999, p. 425). Applying to Starr's definition, we find that Kant's essay "Perpetual Peace" provides an apt example of an argument made from an ethic of conviction. The politician, says Kant, just like everyone else, must "Seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its *righteousness*" (1991, p. 23). I find Starr's distinction particularly clear, but this is contestable terrain in Weber scholarship: cf. Schuluchter (1996), Bruun (2007), Turner (1992).

[23] Unfortunately, given the vile political leader who came to power shortly after Weber's death, Weber's suggestion that the German people needed a charismatic politician to jumpstart political life and beat back bureaucratic governance proved to be infelicitous.

1.6.2 The Philosophy of Bureaucratic or Charismatic Education

Above I identified institutional realism as the norm that tough-minded and significant philosophy of education uses to take a stand on the state of educational institutions. I then identified two adherents of this norm as opposed camps: institutional adjusters and institutional resisters. According to both these camps, if some sort of message emerges for the educator, it would be to seek a better position: perhaps to climb the ranks and become an educational decision-maker, or perhaps to be an activist who hits the streets, or perhaps even a philosopher of education whose reflection foresees a political destiny that lies beyond the educator's everyday practice.

In Weberian terms, institutional adjusters may be classed as those engaged in the philosophy of bureaucratic education (i.e., they reflect on the "impersonal and functional purposes" of educational institutions and the adjustment of persons to externally imposed norms), while institutional resisters might be characterized as those engaged in the philosophy of charismatic education (i.e., they reflect on the moments of educational practice that resist or escape from the present "logic" governing educational institutions). So conceived, Weber's understanding of bureaucracy and charisma clarifies problems with both camps.

Although reflection on adjusting educational institution is not idle, it neglects to consider that many teachers who prioritize the practice of education are primarily working *for* their students as persons. If the practice of education is "highly personal" and the educator strives to revolutionize students "from within", then philosophers who work to make intelligible, say, a conceptual expression of educational opportunity or the just distribution of educational goods are not really in the business of understanding the practice of education or its priority. Their applied political philosophy is not harmful, but its success may obscure the motivation to reflect

carefully on the practice of education beyond institutional regulations and provisions. Anything that cannot be captured by a decision-maker's perspective and impartial norm of reasonableness starts to sound flighty. There is real work to do, *real* educational goods to define and distribute. But, if the rules and norms governing a bureaucratic institution are too clumsy to capture the subjects of education or the motivation of educators, perhaps we should be unnerved that philosophy of bureaucratic education passes as good philosophy of education. For it is questionable that its arguments are even specific to education as such. With some quick editing (e.g., replacing "students" with "patients"), the same arguments might easily pass for a philosophy of hospital administration.

On the other hand, institutional resisters who revel in the fact that the practice of education will never be sufficiently captured by calculable rules or instrumental policies fail to appreciate the necessity of that so-called instrumentalism or "What Works" mentality governing educational institutions (cf. Biesta 2007). Few contemporary institutional resisters are arguing that teachers should forgo their salaries and health benefits and become *bona fide* guerilla educators, nevertheless the conception of educational practice that they espouse conveniently elides the fact that teachers depend upon educational institutions to meet their everyday needs. The practice of education, as it occurs today in our current social and historical context, would scarcely be intelligible if the average teacher were free from the tension of working *for* students while also living *off* educational institutions. Ignoring this tension, and thinking about education as if teachers should only work *for* a given political cause, renders the rhetoric of resistance unrealistic, particularly when voiced with great enthusiasm at massive educational conferences housed in large corporate hotels, which are almost never attended by practicing teachers.

The fact that the majority of teachers live *off* of educational institutions means that decent teachers will experience tension between their obligations. The tension exists because decent teachers are morally and existentially committed to working *for* their particular students. Teachers make countless judgments to prioritize the practice of education amidst competing obligations.[24] But why should this be the case?

A response to this question resides in something already mentioned, namely the intuitive idea that education should equip students to think independently about their lives because in modern society what persons will become and value is not inherited at birth. Or, stated negatively, education should not amount to a careless form of socialization, where, for instance, the person in the room with the loudest voice or the philanthropist in the room with the most money arbitrarily determines the course of a person's life. Readers of this dissertation will likely agree that the practice of education ought to be something more than mere socialization or careless formation—that an education should help students understand and take up a burden of responsibility. For this reason, educational practice carried out by decent teachers should take priority over the collision of values and interests that currently define educational institutions.

My argument is that a Weberian philosophy of education provides a means for reflecting upon the obligation to prioritize educational practice. But my argument has yet to commence because I have not described a Weberian educator. So far I have only mentioned what a Weberian educator is not. She is not a bureaucratic administrator who sees her students as more or less compatible skill, fact, and (perhaps) virtue receptacles; she is not a charismatic life coach

[24] Discussing the practical experience of the educator in his difficult essay "Roscher and Knies and the Logical Problems of Historical Economics," Weber writes: "The endless stream of individual 'immediate experience' that flow through our lives 'schools' the 'imagination' of the pedagogue—and of the pupil—and makes it possible that that 'interpretive understanding' of the life of the mind which the pedagogue needs" (2014, p. 52).

(in the corporate, or "spray on"[25] sense); and she is not a charismatic politician, in the Weberian sense, who inspires a sleepy class by imposing *her* personal cause and *her* sense of responsibility upon them. So how did Weber conceive of educators? An answer is not readily apparent, because two puzzles stand in the way.

1.7 Two Puzzles: Charisma and Specialization

The first puzzle involves the peculiar charisma that Weber ascribes to educators. In a passage of his lecture "Science as a Vocation"—a passage that is, to my knowledge, entirely ignored in the secondary literature—Weber states that the most difficult task of educational practice is to introduce students to ideas so that an "untrained but receptive mind can understand—and crucially—go on to think about them independently." But then, rather mysteriously, he claims that "mastery of this art is a personal *gift*" (2008, p. 30)—a clear allusion to charisma's etymology: *χάρισμα*, meaning a favor given or a gift of grace (OED). So what is the source of the Weberian educator's charisma? What does it mean that educational practice bestows independent thinking through a gift? And why does Weber, typically cast as a tough-minded, disenchanted sociologist, opt to mystify the intuitive value of independent thinking with a concept like charisma?

The second puzzle involves the peculiar ambition of the Weberian educator. To recall the line quoted in the preface of this dissertation, in his lecture "Science as a Vocation," Weber observes that,

> Philosophy, as a specialist discipline, and the discussions, which are essentially philosophical, conducted by the individual disciplines, attempt to achieve

[25] This line is originally from a cartoon that is commented upon in Phillip Reiff's posthumously published book *Charisma: The Gift of Grace, and How It Has Been Taken Away from Us* (p. 3 ff.)

> [clarity/coherence of meaning]. We can, in this way, if we understand the matter (which must be presupposed), compel or at least help the individual to *give an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions to himself*. It seems to me that this should not be underestimated, even for the purely personal life. At this point I am also tempted to say, if a teacher succeeds in this, that he is acting in the service of "moral" forces, performing his duty to create clarity and a sense of responsibility (Weber 2008, p. 48).

The image of an educator compelling students to "*give an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions to himself"* seems exceptionally intense: the sort of quest awaiting an adventurer who arrives at the top of the mountain. Yet Weber bids us not to conceive of the academic lecturer (which includes, for our purposes, a person teaching a specialized subject like algebra) as a sage (2008 p. 48) or a life coach (p. 46). So the puzzle is, how does the Weberian educator who teaches a specialized subject compel students to do something so grandiose as "*give an account of the ultimate meaning of his own actions to himself*"? How does learning algebra or chemistry or art history from an educator who specializes, respectively, in these subjects have anything to do with being compelled to give an account of the ultimate meaning of one's own life?

There are ways to escape these puzzles. Faced with the first, a tempting route is to claim there is no real magic or mystery to independent thinking. Weber was probably just being rhetorical. A less rhetorical conception of what Weber was after, it might be said, can be found in Harry Brighouse's *On Education,* where he suggests that school should prepare students for autonomy by presenting them with a variety of possible lives and allow them to determine which lifestyle matches their preferences based on their constitution. Once the student matches his preference with an available lifestyle, the educator can move in to support him in fulfilling it.

Following Brighouse's vision, the greater a school's buffet of lifestyle options, the better. On this less mysterious reading, the educator who helps students think independently about life simply helps them to realize their preferences. According to his critics, Weber supports this conception of autonomy. As sociologist Phillip Gorski (2013) describes, the Weberian educator simply helps students satisfy their preferences and choose "the best means to [their] own personal or political ends" (p. 546).

Faced with the second puzzle, a tempting route of escape is to ditch the grandiose claim that teaching algebra has something to do with the existential or moral value of a student's conduct of life, and to replace it with the broad social value which responds to an existing problem in the world. Responding to this problem can then imbue teaching with significance. The way to create significance in educational practice lies in educational scholarship, where, put cynically, the name of the game is to identify existing social and political problems and plug them back into everyday educational practice. If it were not for the specialized educator's daily work, some existing problem in the world would become worse – or at least not get any better. This is why educational practice matters, because of the sweeping issues, not because of the moral or existential course of particular student lives.

On my reading of Weber does not grant an escape from either puzzle. Somehow, independent thinking participates in a mystery. Somehow the everyday work of the educator can compel students to give an account of the ultimate meaning of their actions and need not appeal to larger social and political problems as a source of significance. The solution to both puzzles, which launches the argument of this dissertation, can be found in Weber's conception of ideas. Ideas are the source of the educator's charisma, and thinking independently about ideas bears a larger moral and existential significance that goes beyond the confines of a specialized subject.

1.8 Response: Weber's Conception of Ideas

Weber's understanding of ideas offers solutions to the above puzzles in three respects. First, Weber understood ideas to be a creative and mysterious phenomenon. As he describes them in "Science as a Vocation,"

> …work cannot replace the idea or force it to appear anymore than passion can. Both—especially, both *together*—can entice it to come out. But it comes when it chooses not when we choose…all [intellectual] work is accompanied by an element of chance—will inspiration come or will it not (Weber 2008 p. 32).

Weber's point is that there can be activity and dispositions conducive to the emergence of ideas, but the emergence of ideas is still mysterious and incalculable, or, we might say, never wholly shorn of grace.

Second, Weber understood ideas to be psychologically non-specialized. Ideas, whether arising in intellectual, practical or aesthetic domains, have the same "psychological roots" and initiate the same "psychological process" (Weber 1978, p. 1116, Weber 2008, p. 32). For instance, the businessman who has an idea for a profitable venture has an idea like the artist's idea for a painting, or the intellectual's idea for an argument, or the preacher's idea for a sermon, or the lover's idea for a seduction, and so on.

Finally, and most intriguingly for my purposes, Weber thought ideas were accompanied by demands. As he writes in what was originally a footnote of '*Economy and Society,'* "…all these kinds of ideas—including artistic intuition—have in common that to objectivate themselves, to prove their reality, they must signify a grasp on demands [*Forderungen*] of the work, or if you prefer, a being seized by them; they are not merely a subjective feeling or experience" (Weber 1978, p. 1116). Weber's claim is that ideas have the power to obligate and

motivate action. The demand of an idea is to be enacted, objectified, or made real. So if an idea seizes a person—say, an idea for a brilliant poem—yet does not emerge when the poet sits down to write, then the poet might chalk the "idea" up to a mere subjective experience or might continue with redoubled efforts to meet the idea's demand and bring it into reality.

Weber's conception of ideas addresses the above puzzles as follows. First, the source of the Weberian educator's charisma is not her personal cause, but her student's ideas. This involves but means something more than their feelings or experiences. And in response to the second puzzle, the student who has an idea in a particular subject – who does not just get the answer right but has a genuine idea about a problem or solution – engages a "psychological process" which is not confined to, for instance, an algebra problem, but engages a capacity that can be recognized and activated in different domains. So, working the demands of an algebra problem is not unlike and can support working the demands of a poem. Assuming with Weber that this is the case, there is reason to believe that working the demands of an algebra problem engages a capacity like working the demands of "the ultimate meaning" of one's actions. Finally, to respond to both puzzles, the fact that ideas bear demands means that the Weberian educator, who participates in the charisma of her students' ideas, does not remain neutral but imposes value upon the students' lives by *echoing* the demands of ideas. The Weberian educator bids students to think clearly and responsibly about ideas, to make them a reality, not allowing a particular idea to stop short of reality, not resting content with the expression of a regurgitated answer or passing feeling or experience that is neither here nor there.

It is important to consider if Weber's conception of ideas is true, and to challenge it with competing accounts. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will assume it as plausible because, as I see it, this is the surest way to develop a Weberian philosophy of education. If the

reader finds Weber's conception of ideas entirely implausible, then, hopefully after considering my argument for a Weberian philosophy of education, this would be a relevant place for him or her to critique the project. I now return to the project of defining a Weberian philosophy of education.

1.9 The Basic Tenet of a Weberian Philosophy of Education

The high aim of the educator, according to a Weberian philosophy of education, is to provoke within students an *active responsibility* for understanding the ultimate meaning of their obligations in the world. The practice of education, accordingly, does not involve persuading students to accept or adjust to given obligations, nor does it involve imposing obligations or visions upon them through the unregulated force of the educator's personality. Instead, the practice of education involves compelling students to think independently about the meaning of their obligations as these obligations arise in their everyday lives. The ultimate object of a student's active responsibility, for the Weberian educator, is the student's calling: an idea about the ultimate meaning of the student's obligations in the world. The Weberian educator—to be very clear—does *not* provoke the student's specific and substantial calling, but contributes to their capacity to have one. The bulk of this dissertation will be given to analyzing and elucidating what the Weberian educator's particular work in relationship to the student's calling is; put otherwise, I seek to provide a general account of the understanding sought and conveyed by an educator who engages in daily work, echoing the demands of particular ideas in the confines of a specialized academic discipline, while being attentive to her work's relationship to and influence upon a student's calling. The basic tenet of a Weberian philosophy of education is "an educated calling," defined as a student's active responsibility bearing upon the ultimate meaning of his obligations in the world.

While what is meant by "active responsibility" and "calling" will be developed throughout this dissertation, the quickest way to introduce these concepts and summarize a Weberian philosophy of education is through a maxim of Goethe's which Weber was wont to repeat: "Try to do your duty and you'll soon discover what you are like. But what is your duty? The demands of the day [*die Forderungen des Tages*]" (Goethe 1999, p. 57). According to a Weberian philosophy of education, the practice of education attends to the formation that occurs as students learn to meet the demands of the day. The responsibility is active because each day brings new demands. Recognizing the novelty and particularity of each day's demands cannot be achieved by minding impersonal and functional duty or being bulldozed by another personality. The Weberian educator echoes the demands of particular ideas and thereby promotes a student's independent thinking and helps him to understand and take up a burden of responsibility in a non-ideal and pluralistic society. An educated calling, as an image of excellence, is what motivates the Weberian educator to attend to the practice of education (in a variety of situations) and set her more specific goals and orient her daily decisions accordingly. Why should the fundamental obligation to prioritize the practice of education be heeded by educators within educational institutions? According to a Weberian philosophy of education, this is the case because fostering students' capacities to think independently about ideas, conceived of as *their* demands of the day, is the source of motivation to educate particular persons and the grounds of the educator's dignity.

1.10 On the Uncertain Relationship Between Education and a Person's Calling

Before proceeding, it is important to raise an objection about the relationship between students discovering and working the demands of particular problems (e.g., an algebraic equation) and students discovering and working the demands of their calling. The objection is:

can we be certain this sort of continuity exists?[26] Suppose a Weberian educator presents material to her students in a manner that gives rise to ideas and then proceeds to echo the demands of these ideas as they arise for her particular students. Suppose further that one of her students, who enthusiastically heeds the demands of algebra, grows up to be a woman with no strong convictions about the "ultimate meaning" of her life. Despite being taught by a Weberian educator, the very idea of a calling is unpersuasive to this woman. Does this outcome make the Weberian educator somehow remiss for educating a life not dedicated to an educated calling?

I raise this objection to highlight the uncertainty between learning a particular lesson and the eventual course of a student's life. Rather than refuting this uncertainty, my dissertation accepts if not embraces it. I am not arguing that the Weberian educator's lessons must yield a certain moral and existential outcome, a *called* product, as it were. On the contrary, I hope to provide an unqualified critique of the impulse to project the existential and moral trajectory of a particular person's education. The Weberian educator is content with provoking an active responsibility for insights arising in her subject matter and attends to their formative potential, but she is not so rash as to expect a certain result in the form of a human subject. What an idea demands of a particular person—how working it and demonstrating its reality subtly transforms him based on the way he has already been formed and launches him into an unseen future as a changed being — is not a process amenable to given outcomes and predetermined expectations. Certain aspects of a person's development can be calculated, indeed, but the whole is not subject to calculation. Or, as Weber puts the matter in his essay "Roscher and Knies" with explicit reference to the classroom: "From the point of view of the 'laws of science,' each individual

[26] The term continuity is developed at length in chapter 3 of John Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1997). The gist of the term is that past experiences enter into and modify future experiences.

[student] represents and individual constellation of an infinite number of individual causal chains." (Weber 2014, p. 52).[27] Yet educators, who attend to particular persons, and their lives as a whole, catch sight of what calculation cannot. A student's moral and existential trajectory may be *foreseen* by the educator, but only through a glass dimly, as she sees the student meeting the "demands of the day." The educator's foresight exists, but particular persons, educational experience, and hopeful anticipation constitute her vision—not given outcomes. In the end, the most reliable judgment about the course of a person's formation it is not found through educational scholarship, but through reflection and personal testimony.[28] For those who can risk thinking about education without the expectation of scientific foresight, and the ready-made product in view, Augustine's *Confessions* provides a surer guide than current best sellers like *How Children Succeed*.[29]

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[27] The full passage reads as follows: "For the purposes of practical education, the concrete pupil, or the multitude of concrete pupils, are considered as *individuals*; and those of their qualities that are relevant for the take of exerting pedagogical influence have, in important respects, been conditioned by an immense number of quite concrete influences emanating from their "disposition" and their individual milieu" (in the widest sense of the term). In their turn, these influences can from every possible point of view be made the object of scientific investigation, including 'objectifying" investigation; but they certainly cannot be produced experimentally in the laboratory of a *psychologist*. From the point of view of the "laws of science," each individual represents and individual constellation of an infinite number of individual causal chains (2014, p. 51-52).

[28] To provide personal examples, discussing an unassigned passage of a Richard Wright novel with my 10th grade English teacher at lunch or being encouraged by my wrestling coach to "sprint the hills" are moments in my education that moved beyond their particular lessons and contexts and came to shape my ultimate commitments. I feel obligated to discuss ideas off the institutional schedule, and to run when the conditions are more suitable for walking. These were not personal attributes. They are obligations that echo in my life like the voices of my two favorite educators. And these obligations spoil, or become cliché, if they are generalized—e.g., applied to any novel or hill and used to set a mass curriculum.

[29] This is not to say self-deception doesn't exist. Indeed, one can acknowledge the phenomenon of self-deception, perhaps through ulterior sources, and use it to interpret an autobiography,

The particularity and incalculable nature of a person's moral and existential trajectory provides good reason for educational institutions to ignore it presently, as it is too fine a matter, and perhaps too gross, for the institution's net of rules and accountability schemes. Furthermore, such a trajectory should cause educational scholars to question their efforts to stoke anticipation for massive social or political outcomes following one particular educational reform or another. Indeed, so much shrill noise about the direction of education would be hushed, and so much respect for particular human subjects would be gained, if educational scholars realized that the moral and existential trajectory that a person takes as he discovers and works particular ideas necessitates room for mystery and grace.

Although institutions and educational scholars can, educators cannot ignore the possibility that working *for* particular students, holistic beings, involves contributing to or compromising students' capacity to heed the demands of more consequential ideas about the meaning of their lives. Rather than putting another undue burden on educators, however, I contend that conveying an understanding of what it means for the Weberian educator to teach students particular lessons while attentive to and in anticipation of his or her calling best captures and motivates the ideal qualities of the fundamental obligation to prioritize the practice of education amidst educational institutions today.

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while still privileging a first-person testimony and holding that the autobiography is a reliable account of a person's education.

Chapter 2
Self-Examination and The Condition of Confusion

2.1 Introduction

The claim of this dissertation is that a Weberian philosophy of education provides a valuable means for reflecting upon and motivating the priority of educational practice amidst educational institutions. The basic tenet of a Weberian philosophy of education is an educator who provokes students, from within, to take an active responsibility for understanding the meaning of their obligations in the world. Responding to the important objection that this grandiose claim makes little sense for the educator who teaches a specific subject, like algebra, I explained that the algebra teacher who provokes an active responsibility for particular algebraic ideas contributes to the student's capacity to respond to his calling: an idea about the ultimate meaning of his obligations in the world. This explanation was then supported by Weber's conception of ideas:

- The notion that ideas emerge mysteriously.
- The notion that ideas—whether arising in mathematics, business, or art—have a common psychological basis, and thus the formation that occurs from heeding the demands of a particular idea cannot be confined to specialized domains.
- The notion that ideas are accompanied by obligations that "seize" a person and compel him to have "a grasp on 'demands' of the 'work'" (Weber 1978, p. 1116).

I claimed that working the "demands of the day" that arise from ideas in an algebra class bear a relationship, albeit a dimly foreseeable and inappropriately calculable relationship, to working the more ultimate "demands of the day" that arise through a person's calling.

The problem of this chapter arises from the distinction Weber draws between working the demands of ideas and merely having what we might call an "insightful" subjective experience.

Weber draws this distinction in a section of *Economy and Society* entitled "Charisma and Its Transformation."[30] Therein Weber writes,

> all these kinds of ideas—including artistic intuition—have in common that to objectivate themselves, to prove their reality, they must signify a grasp on the demands of the "work," or, if you prefer, a being seized by them; *they are not merely a subjective feeling or experience*. (emphasis added, Weber 1978, p. 1116).

It is not an interpretive stretch to claim that Weber is referring here to his own conception of education. A few lines later Weber references the process of learning law or the multiplications tables by rote as examples of the opposite educational process, one that renders a student's encounter with a subject's insights irrelevant.[31] Rote memory or mere "proficiency"—symptomatic of the external demands of a bureaucratic education and standardized testing—does not describe the goal of the Weberian educator. The Weberian educator's aim is to bestow the gift of independent thinking. She proceeds by presenting material in a manner that gives rise to ideas; the demands of ideas, and ideas alone, enable the Weberian educator to provoke an active responsibility *within* students by echoing their demands.

Although it may be difficult to imagine such an exceptional algebra teacher, it is not so difficult to see the difference between an algebraic idea and a "subjective experience" about algebra, that is, an obligation for validity arising from an algebraic problem *versus* a feeling had while doing "algebra." To illustrate this, imagine a student who exhibits tremendous enthusiasm in regards to his work on a given problem and yet remains wrong about it. The student, in this

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[30] In *Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft* this line is a footnote. Translator Gunther Roth includes it as a parenthetical remark in *Economy and Society* (Weber 1978).

[31] I say opposite in light of this line from *Economy and Society:* "…the two polar opposites in the field of educational ends are to awaken charisma, that is, heroic qualities and magical gifts; and to impart specialized expert training… (Weber 1978, p. 426)

case, has an incorrect insight. The source of the student's enthusiasm can be found in "subjective experience" as opposed to the standards governing the validity of algebraic problems. The standard governing their validity is impersonal. An impersonal standard is a necessary condition of a student having a genuine idea about algebra, but it is not sufficient. After all, a student can have no genuine ideas about algebra and merely learn clever strategies for "hacking" standardized tests and fare the same, on paper, as a student who has had true algebraic ideas and worked their demands.[32] Despite the apparent equivalence between the two students on paper, where all that matters is whether the test taker chose the "right" or "wrong" answer on a specific question within a highly controlled testing environment, the Weberian educator, who works for particular students, treats the demands of algebraic ideas as something more than a "right" or "wrong" answer. A shallow correct answer is insufficient, because heeding the demands of ideas is formative for her students; working the demands of ideas prepares students to think independently about the obligation's governing their lives. Thus, being shallowly correct will not suffice. However, if there is only a dimly foreseen and inappropriately calculable relationship between students working particular academic demands and persons working demands springing from an account of "*the ultimate meaning of* [their] *actions*" (Weber 2008, p. 48), the question correctly arises: What does it mean to get the latter wrong? That is, is there an impersonal standard governing the validity of a person's self-examination?

I will assume it is non-controversial to say that thinking independently about the ultimate meaning of one's actions in a non-ideal and pluralistic society yields results with a looser standard of validity than algebraic equations. Actions are partially determined by prior experience and partially beset by a host of situational factors that belie the agent's conscious

[32] This is perhaps another way of stating Delbanco's illustration of grace.

intentions. However, assuming with Weber that persons have a degree of agency, it remains unclear if Weber has an impersonal standard that can be used to distinguish between a person *working* ideas about his or her self and entertaining subjective *feelings* and *preferences* about his or her self. That is, it is unclear if Weber has an impersonal standard for determining whether a person who takes an active responsibility for his life has actually gotten it right or merely feels right about it. The lack of clarity on this point poses a problem for the argument of this dissertation.

Thus far, I have claimed that the Weberian educator imposes active responsibility upon students by presenting and echoing the demands of particular ideas. The Weberian educator does not presume to foresee a student's future obligations, nor does she determine them with a given end, but she is not neutral on the question of the student's fate and hopes her educational practice will inform it. Specifically, she hopes her students will hear her voice in the future. She hopes her once strictly algebraic guidance will be transformed and echo something like the following admonition: "This is not an algebraic problem, assuredly, but I know you from watching you work; and you should keep working this problem and not rest content until you get it right."

If working ideas about algebra is formative, and not confined to an 8th grade classroom, then the echo of the Weberian educator's voice is more than a fanciful or sentimental projection. For recalling the Weberian educator's voice, or the admonition of a great teacher, would recall the enlivening memory of working particular ideas. It would recall a memory of agency, a memory of being aroused by an idea and heeding its demands. Now, if there were no impersonal standard governing algebra, the educator's efforts to echo algebraic "demands" would be spurious persuasion; there would be no memory of working ideas but only memories of being pushed and pulled by the shifting tones of subjective experience.

My argument in this dissertation rests upon the plausibility of the claim that there is continuity between working particular ideas in the classroom and working ideas about the ultimate meaning of one's life. This assumes that the latter can be made manifest as an idea and, so defined, be subject to correctness or incorrectness according to an impersonal standard. Although a person's life is more complex than an algebraic equation, if there were *no* impersonal standard governing thoughts about the ultimate meaning of one's actions in the world, then working particular insights in an academic context would be discontinuous with meeting the "demands of the day." Put another way, thinking independently about algebra would be an affair of ideas; while thinking independently about one's life would be an affair of subjective experience. So, if it is wholly unclear whether there can be an impersonal standard that determines the correctness or incorrectness of an idea about the meaning of one's life, then the assumption that there is a relationship between particular academic ideas and self-examination will be sorely compromised.

The claim I will defend in this chapter is that a Weberian philosophy of education uses a social condition marked by confusion—rather than a given impersonal standard—to help students distinguish between working ideas about the ultimate meaning of their obligations in the world and subjective experiences or mere preferences about their life. I shall refer to social condition as the *condition of confusion,* which can be understood as the dormant or everyday state of the intellectual position Weber described as "value collision." "Value collision" holds that social values are ultimately irreconcilable and antagonistic, for instance, that political, religious, economic, aesthetic, intellectual, and erotic values cannot be unified into one over arching framework. The condition of confusion is constituted by the multiple impersonal standards governing different value spheres and defined by Weber's postulate that these

standards are always mixed up and compromised in everyday life. Consequently, it is possible on Weber's account to determine the correctness of one's life according to an impersonal standard. But, in order to not do so shallowly, or based on a mere preference or external compulsion, a person must first discover the need to clarify and take responsibility for the impersonal standards at play by confronting the condition of confusion. What does it mean for a person to examine his life, and heed the demands of an *idea* about it, when the correctness or incorrectness of his examination first involves confronting a condition of confusion?[33]

To make this argument, I will begin by examining an objection springing from two related philosophical critiques of Weber. Both critiques emanate from the objection that Weber lacks an impersonal standard for distinguishing between excellent and base lives, and thus espouses relativism. The first critique, offered by political philosopher Leo Strauss, states that Weber's thinking amounts to *nihilism*: "…the view that every preference, however, evil, base, for instance, has to be judged before the tribunal of reason to be as legitimate as any other preference" (1965 p. 42). The second critique, proposed by moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, is that Weber's thinking is an example of *emotivism*: "…the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" (2007, p. 12). I will first cast suspicion on these critiques by demonstrating that they are lodged, respectively, from uncharitable and hasty readings of Weber. Taking greater care to understand what Weber means does not reveal the work of a superficial or disreputable thinker, but a careful educator who was attuned to the risks of impetuous thinking.

[33] To be clear, Weber's theory of value collisions will pervade this entire dissertation and will be given the most explicit focus in chapter 5.

I will then turn to a letter Weber wrote to his wife describing his pedagogical relationship with a particular young man called Herr Voigt. *Contra* Strauss and MacIntyre's claims, it is plain from this example that Weber is not espousing nihilism or emotivism, but rather guarding Herr Voigt against the impulse to rush irresponsibly into a partially understood position. To better understand how Weber conceives of his student, Herr Voigt, I will draw an analogy to Plato's understanding of the *daemon*, particularly as it is developed in the "Myth of Er"—the bewildering account Plato uses to conclude his *Republic.* Although the connection I make here is novel in the realm of Weber scholarship, as far as I have read, it is by no means arbitrary. The prominent Weber scholar Wilhelm Hennis has deemed Weber's relationship to Plato "…the most urgent desiderata of Weber scholarship" (2001, p. 91).[34] Moreover, the "Myth of Er" clearly depicts relevant themes of this chapter: the distinction between ideas about the self and mere preferences, the complexities of agency in a partially determined world, and the educator's concern for the student's self-examination. Finally, and most importantly, Weber refers to this same myth at a seminal point of his lecture, "The Meaning of 'Value' Freedom" (first presented in 1914). I will conclude this chapter by comparing Plato's call for active responsibility for one's *daemon*, governed by a cosmic standard of justice, with Weber's call for active responsibility in regard to ideas about one's identity held against a condition of confusion. The argument of this chapter begins with an objection.

[34] The connection between Plato and Weber has also been duly noted in Goldman 1992 and Villa 2001. These are sources Hennis does not cite. However, I do not think Goldman or Villa do the connection justice as their purpose is to draw this connection to serve their argument rather than carefully examine its scope and nuances. I hope what follows provides another modest contribution.

2.2 The Objection of Relativism

The fundamental objection is that the Weberian educator, who hopes that students will take an active responsibility for the ultimate meaning of their obligations in the world, is actually (and unwittingly) encouraging relativism. Relativism, in this case, is a position that dignifies any action regardless of whether it is excellent or base. If the Weberian educator espouses relativism, this is a cause for concern because there is nothing stopping the Weberian educator's voice from supporting any "demand of the day": whether, for instance, it is an obligation to promote racial justice or to abuse people who appear to be different. If provoking an active responsibility for *any* obligation (and thus *no* obligation) goes, then there is relativism, or, worse yet, relativism cloaked in the language of responsibility. This general critique of relativism finds specific expression in the writing of Leo Strauss and Alasdair MacIntyre.

2.2.1 Strauss and Weber as Nihilist

Strauss's critique of Weber in *Natural Right and History* (1965) is intended to be devastating. His appreciative remark at the beginning of his critique "Whatever may have been his errors, [Weber] is the greatest social scientist of our century" (p. 36) quickly becomes ironic in light of the conclusion he guides his reader towards: namely, that Weber's "doctrine of values" leads to a nihilism which Weber aimed to "conceal from himself." (p. 42). If the *greatest* social scientist of the century is a self-deceived nihilist, it is not hard to imagine how Strauss regards the average social scientist. Strauss uses Weber's doctrine of values as a means for reducing the ethical foundations of contemporary social sciences to absurdity. I am sympathetic to Strauss's critique of contemporary social science, but not his use of Weber as a means of critique. I hope to discredit Strauss' argument against Weber in what follows.

Strauss' argument against Weber proceeds through a series of moral imperatives and takes the form of a *reductio ad absurdum.* He begins with the imperatives "Thou shalt have ideals" and "Become what thou art," noting that, for Weber, the dignity of a person is achieved through autonomy, where one freely decides upon and thinks independently about one's own values (p. 44). So far, so good—judges Strauss. This imperative allows us to distinguish between excellence and baseness. Yet it does not rest secure because Weber advocated pluralism, not a stable hierarchy of values. So, "Thou shalt have ideals" abruptly regresses to "Follow thy god or demon," which Strauss interprets to mean "Strive resolutely for excellence or baseness" (p. 45). This move causes confusion, but retains a shred of nobility. The shred is soon lost, however, because Weber recognized the possibility of "'vitalistic'" values railing against impersonal and supra-personal standards. Consequently, the new imperative becomes "Thou shalt live passionately" (p. 46-47). This imperative poses a problem. When applied in light of "Thou shalt have ideals," appeals to personal preferences seem to coexist equally with a host of impersonal standards and there is no way to rationally privilege one way of life over the next. Because of this confusion, says Strauss, Weber's higher claims "Thou shalt have ideals" and "Become what thou art," can be reduced to a nihilistic command that does not distinguish between excellent and base actions—specifically, an absurd imperative: "Thou shalt have preferences" (p. 47).

Strauss' argument is rather slick at this point. But after triumphantly announcing his conclusion, Strauss makes two qualifications that compromise his argument. The first is that Weber's appeal to responsibility comes too late in the day: "We cannot take seriously this belated insistence on responsibility and sanity" (p. 47). However, Weber's insistence on the importance of responsibility is only belated in Strauss' own argument. Weber need not be read along these lines. My dissertation contends that an appeal to active responsibility comes first and

foremost in Weber's ethical and educational views. It is not a belated appeal, but one issued at dawn and dusk. When responsibility is included at the outset, Strauss' entire argument becomes suspect, starting from the conclusion "Thou shalt have [responsible] preferences" and working backwards.

The second qualification Strauss acknowledges is that Weber may have claimed impersonal and supra-personal standards could be rejected in the name of human freedom, according to the imperative "Become what thou art" or "Choose thy fate," yet to develop this argument, admits Strauss, would require a "break" with Weber's doctrine of values (p 48-49). This demands further qualification, however, because Strauss acknowledges a few pages back that "Weber never explained what he meant by 'values'" (p. 39), so Weber may not have advanced a clear and systematic doctrine of values to begin with. If this is the case, then a "break" with Weber's doctrine of values is not very difficult to achieve, and a more charitable consideration as to why Weber might sanction the rejection of impersonal standards in the name of human freedom is in order.

Rather than poking small holes in an argument devised by an admittedly superior mind, the argument of this chapter is better served by pausing for a moment to appreciate Strauss' worry about the contemporary social sciences. There is an important worry here, I think, which can be captured through an educational analogy. Picture Strauss as a clever young student who hears his social studies teacher pronounce, with great solemnity and pomp, that she is going to teach a unit on politics but will not disclose her own political views because "personal views and opinions" are irrelevant to the study of politics.[35] The clever Strauss hears the teacher's vow but then registers countless instances, day after day, of the teacher plainly displaying her political

[35] For an instructive treatment of these concerns see *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education* (Hess and McAvoy 2015).

views. Strauss starts to lose patience with his teacher. Yet, to his amazement, he suffers impatience alone. All of his classmates overlook the teacher's daily disclosures because they revere their teacher and believe that having political views truly has nothing to do with the study of politics. The teacher's moments of disclosure are like sneezes to the other students, which happen from time to time but are not worth further analysis or remark. I wholeheartedly agree that lessons taught by social scientists should provoke concern if they dispose students to treat values like sneezes.

A contemporary articulation of Strauss' worry, which incorporates language from MacIntyre as well, can be found in the work of sociologist Philip Gorski (2012):

> …sociology finds itself quite bereft of a moral vocabulary, and graduate training in the field often serves as a kind of moral *un*-education, in which students are taught to transform their convictions into researchable programs (a good thing) before sloughing them off entirely (a bad thing)" (Gorski 2012 p. 99)

Like Strauss, Gorski views Weber as a prime culprit in the moral *un*-education of contemporary sociologists. In another article, Gorski also deems Weber a nihilist for holding that "our decision to devote ourselves to one 'ultimate value' rather than another is fundamentally arbitrary" and "values are subjective and relative" (2013, p. 545-546); and finally, like Strauss, Gorski ends his article with a suspicious qualification that should cause readers to revisit his prior critique. According to Gorski, Weber's views can be partially vindicated because Weber's distinctions between value spheres guards against the totalization of intellectual values—what might be called technocratic or scientistic governance— and facilitates open-mindedness. Yet if Weber's pluralism can be used to facilitate open-mindedness and guard against the totalization of intellectual values, then perhaps we have reason to believe that Weber's "nihilistic" views are

less entrenched and perhaps more complicated than Strauss and Gorski care to acknowledge. Granting that social scientists who treat moral values like sneezes and participate in the moral un-education of their students are a cause for real concern, it remains to be seen if Weber—a thinker whose sharp vision saw so much—was truly blind to the problem of nihilism in his own work.

2.2.2 MacIntyre and Weber as Emotivist

Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of Weber resembles Strauss', yet it harbors an additional cause for concern. For MacIntyre, Weber is not only a relativist who holds that "the choice of any one particular evaluative stance or commitment can be no more rational than that of any other," but Weber also endorses an ethical perspective that allows for the unmitigated manipulation of others; this is the case because Weber's view of authority cannot "appeal to rational criteria to vindicate itself except that type of bureaucratic authority which appeals precisely to its own *effectiveness*…[to] successful power" (2007, p. 26). These two charges find a common ground in MacIntyre's definition of emotivism. For the emotivist, the only purpose of evaluative utterances is to express one's own feelings or to transform (read: manipulate) the feelings and attitudes of others. So, if the Weberian educator were an emotivist, then there would be no impersonal standard governing whether a student's reflections on the meaning of his actions are correct or not; there would only be (a) the student's *feelings* about the world and (b) the question of how to most powerfully and efficiently move others into accord with these feelings. The teacher would be like the charisma coach mentioned in my first chapter.

MacIntyre's worry is that the emotivist educator not only imparts the maxim "Thou shalt have preferences," but also "Might [of preferences] makes right [of preferences]."[36]

But is it really so easy to read Weber as an emotivist? A hasty move MacIntyre makes in *After Virtue* is to conflate Weber's ethical views with his description of bureaucratic authority. MacIntyre writes, "Weber is then, in the broader sense in which I have understood the term, an emotivist and his portrait of a bureaucratic authority is an emotivist portrait" (MacIntyre 2007, p. 26). It is easy to see how Weber's description of bureaucratic authority might be aligned with emotivism, and why MacIntyre chose to use the stark images of a Weberian bureaucracy[37] governed by external rewards and sanctions alone. Yet it is difficult, for me at any rate, to see how Weber's description of bureaucracy can be collapsed into a conception of authority that Weber was endorsing; it is far more plausible that Weber chose to dramatically emphasize the restrictive and inhumane aspects of bureaucratic authority in order to resist its total authority, and that the normative implications of these dramatic descriptions, besides offering material for future moral philosophers and critical theorists to use, amount to an "exercise in defending humanity" (Mommsen 1992, p. 115).

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[36] Anticipating our later discussion of Plato, this point can be expressed in another way. For the emotivist educator, we might say, there would *only* be the need for an education in rhetoric, for bringing the crowd around to one's own feelings and private preferences, however base. There would never be the need for philosophy, which would motivate, as Plato writes in *Gorgias*, the "the true political craft" that does not "aim at gratification but at what's best" (Plato 1987, 521d). What is "best" implies an impersonal standard that can govern conduct and issue demands regardless of a person's preferences. The emotivist educator (or charisma coach) lacks such a standard and thus cannot impart any conception of what is best.

[37] In his short essay "The Claims of After Virtue" (1998), MacIntyre writes, "Social reality has a kind of unpredictability which the Weberian managerial ethos cannot acknowledge without revealing how much of the claims of modern private and public bureaucracy rests upon deception and self-deception (p. 71).

Yet MacIntyre's conflation of a Weberian description with a Weberian norm is quite common amongst Weber's critics, particularly those descending from Strauss' critique. Responding to Strauss' critique in particular, an important Weber scholar and translator, Hans Henrik Bruun, captures what is perhaps the most common conflation of all – namely, the move to conflate Weber's appeal to the limits of specialized, academic knowledge with an appeal to the limits of reason itself (Bruun 2007, p. 19 ff.). Although Weber resisted the academic expert's determination of human action and decision, this does not mean that Weber promoted irrational decisions and arbitrary choices *simpliciter*. Weber was not so arrogant to think that every action and decision could be fully determined by intellectuals serving the modern academic machine; on the other hand, Weber was also not so pessimistic as to think that academic scholarship amounted to a mixture of confused drives, conformity, and ossification as Nietzsche, for instance, portrays in his essay "Schopenhauer as Educator." The point for now is that Weber's conception of "science" (*Wissenschaft*) should not be conflated with "reason," and his conception of politics should not be conflated with "irrationality." As Weber observes in his lecture, "The 'objectivity' of Knowledge" (originally written in 1904), intellectual critique should support a person's responsibility to make a decision, but the decision "must be taken by the striving person who, in accordance with his own conscience and worldview *weighs* the values in question and chooses between them." (Weber 2014, p. 102). Put otherwise, the striving person is not irrational nor utterly beholden to the academies' epistemic authority, because no one value sphere—including the intellectual sphere, and the employees of the institutions sustaining it—can determine the meaning a person ascribes to his actions as he *deliberates* about his own life. If it could, then there would be no need for independent thinking *per se,* and not much value ascribable to a particular person's striving. Furthermore, there would be no need for

an education focused on particular persons; there would only be a need for the right sort of governance to enforce the correct choice between adjustment to the social order or the groundless decision to embrace willful ignorance, irrationality, and insubordination.

This worry about a "totalitarian straightjacket for the human condition," a worry used by philosophers like Isaiah Berlin to motivate an endorsement of value pluralism, is one that MacIntyre anticipates and rejects (2007, p. 143). MacIntryre's rejection of value pluralism is worthy of consideration. For, if value pluralism stands, so does an endorsement of thoughtlessness. After all, we can easily imagine two sincere and deliberate strivers who pursue irreconcilable or conflicting values. According to value pluralism, the lives of both strivers must be equally good and thinking must halt there because thought is incapable of evaluating the desirability of these contradictory lives. Hence a space of thoughtlessness is preserved. Appeals to value pluralism seem designed to protect a space of thoughtlessness, which, as thinkers like Strauss and MacIntryre worry, cannot help but accommodate a harmful form of relativism. Ideas about the correct meaning of one's actions *must* lack an overarching impersonal standard; they *must* be nothing more than a matter of subjective experience and preference. This creates a society where there is plenty of wiggle room. But it also creates a society where the presence of impersonal standards governing a person's understanding of their conduct of life lacks educational authority; within a reasonable political system, as John Rawls observes, the expectation reigns that "the comprehensive doctrines of most people are not fully comprehensive" (Rawls 2001, p. 197). Put otherwise, most strivers do not really understand the values they are striving after, and need not strive consistently, lest the space for thoughtlessness be compromised.

Nevertheless, is accepting pluralism, and the subsequent space given to thoughtlessness, really the best antidote to a "totalitarian straightjacket for the human condition" (MacIntyre 2007, p. 143)? Why not call it a philosophical tribute to the soft despotism governing a consumerist society, which demands loudly, consistently and sleeplessly: "Thou shalt have preferences and strive to satisfy them…and nothing much more."

2.3 Weber's Concern for His Student's Self-Examination

Against these objections, I argue that Weber did not endorse value pluralism in order to champion irrational preferences or to preserve a space for thoughtlessness, but rather to motivate independent thinking. This becomes clear when Weber is read as an educator, intent on provoking an active responsibility within students for heeding the ideas that shape their identities. A helpful illustration of Weber's care for his students' self-examination can be seen by turning to a letter he wrote to his wife Marianne.

The letter describes the indirect pedagogical strategy Weber employed while conversing with a young theologian named Herr Voigt. Weber observes,

> I avoided asking him point-blank what *he* thought about this or that important point—and I think I was right in this. Here is my reason for this: I know from experience—that if at Herr V.'s stage of development a man is goaded into taking a stand on a point he has not yet worked out in his own mind and expresses an opinion, he is apt not to continue his dispassionate quest for truth—naturally, a man feels bound, as it were, to something that he has once said—but, without knowing it, to look only for reasons to justify what he once said. Thus he is nailed down to his own statement, which is often made only under a momentary impression.
>
> (Weber 1975, p. 154)

This passage goes far in exemplifying a Weberian philosophy of education. The particular questions and concerns—Herr V's stance on "this or that important point"—are not compartmentalized. They bear significance beyond themselves. Herr V's position on "this or that important point" contributes to the formation of his identity. Given the connection between particular problems and the student's identity, it matters tremendously whether a particular problem is "worked out" independently or forced upon a person by the educator (or some other situational pressure). Here Weber recognized an important point regarding the psychology of a student's identity: a student who affirms a position will have an interest in defending it, insofar as espousing the position becomes associated with protecting his identity. An implication of this psychological observation is that if a position is only partially understood—because it is, in fact, another's—then the student will work to justify the external "demands" established by another person or system, perhaps according to the strength or persuasive quality of the "momentary impression" made upon him.[38] However, if a position and its obligations are understood, the student who holds it will be working *his own* demands of the day, and thereby define himself according to an idea he has mastered and is able to resolutely defend.

If there were no ideas involved here, if Strauss (et al.) are correct and the Weberian educator is fundamentally just endorsing the imperatives "Thou shalt have preferences" and "Thou shalt make groundless and arbitrary decisions," then it is perplexing that Weber would even care about Herr Voigt's "dispassionate quest for truth" (Weber 1975, p. 154) and not simply proceed with eliciting his charge's "opinions" or "preferences," whatever they happened to be. But matters become less perplexing when Weber's conception of ideas and educational commitment to his student's independent thinking are taken seriously. It is difficult to deny that

[38] This is another way of stating that the Weberian educator is not a charisma coach.

Weber cared about his students and felt bound to his practical work as an educator. Indeed, as Wilhelm Hennis suggested, the dominant concern of Weber's work is whether there is an "…intellectually responsible manner in which [persons] can be inwardly aroused, or do the prospects of education exhaust themselves in training for practical administrative employment." (Hennis 2000, p. 91). Expressed differently, using language introduced in chapter one, the concern is: Can there be an educational charisma that arises internally, from the demands of ideas, or is all education simply a matter of bureaucratic education (heeding given institutional demands and meeting given standards) or charismatic persuasion (being attracted by another's personal magnetism)? Entertaining the idea that Weber *did* care about his students' self-examination and "dispassionate quest for truth," and recalling the earlier point that Weber distinguishes between ideas and subjective experience, it remains to be determined how Weber understood a person's idea about the meaning of his or her life.

2.4 An Idea about the Self: An Analogy to the Platonic Daemon

One approach to this question would be to explore studies on Weber's conception of the personality (cf. Farris 2013) and then plug these back into his educational views with the support of scholarship that has already paved the way (Goldman 1992). I think a more promising approach, particularly for the rather elusive subject at hand, is to approach the question through an analogy to Plato's *daemon*,[39] particularly as Plato describes it in the Myth of Er. My analogy

[39] "Daemon" is also translated "daimon." As the German scholar Angus Nicholls notes, "The two different ways of translating δαίμων (daemon and daimon) reflect different transliteration conventions used in separate historical periods. The Latinate "daemon" was favored during the Romantic period, while "daimon" reflects the more direct transliteration used in recent scholarship. Only one form of spelling (*Dämon*) is used in German." (2006, p. 10-11) For the purposes of this dissertation I will use daemon, following the rendering of *Dämon* as daemon in Gordon C. Wells translation of "Science as a Vocation" (Weber 2008).

runs as follows: Weber conceives of ideas arising about the self from a student's self-examination like Plato conceived of a person's *daemon*.

An initial concern might be that this connection appears arbitrary, but there is actually a vital connection between Plato and Weber. Wilhelm Hennis, for instance, has suggested an "examination of Weber's relationship to Plato belongs among the most urgent desiderata of Weber scholarship. At the most important points of Weber's writings he justifies himself by reference to Plato" (Hennis 2001, p. 91). Passing connections between Weber and Plato have also been made by sociologist Harvey Goldman (1992) and, more recently, by political theorist Dana Villa (2001), but there is far more to be said. Again, my analogy will be that Weber conceives of ideas about the self arising from a student's self-examination like Plato conceived of a person's *daemon*.

2.4.1 Historical Connections

Another relevant concern is that there are innumerable historical connections needed to sufficiently ground the analogy. This is particularly true if we include the genealogy of Plato's conception of the *daemon*, which would require turning back to Homer (where the term *daemon* originally meant "allotter" or "fated" and the adjective meant "incomprehensible" or "uncanny") as well as noting diachronic variation in the term's meaning through pre-Socratic philosophers like Heraclitus and Empedocles (cf. Darcus 1974).[40] Wolfgang Zucker's article "The Demonic: From Aeschylus to Tillich" (1969) provides an impressive snapshot of the historical terrain.

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[40] For Empedocles, the daemon was the entity underlying successive incarnations, and as classicist Shirley Darcus explains, "a man's *daimon* is an active force working within him to shape his life" (Darcus 1974 p. 398); Heraclitus described a person's *ethos* (or disposition) as shaped by his *daimon* (p. 399). But as it is through the *daimon* that a person achieves first-hand knowledge (*gnome*) of the divine, "[h]uman capabilities are extended and enlarged" by the daimon, "the power within" (p. 406).

Zucker notes that the *daemon* in Plato can mean both "a benevolent helper towards self-realization, consenting to man's autonomy as long as he does not lose himself in his passions," but also a person's "connection to the divine" (p. 38-39). Angus Nicholls' recent work *Goethe's Concept of the Daemonic: After the Ancients* (2006) is the most thorough study I have come across that links the ancient conception of the *daemon* to modern German conceptions. Nicholls sets out to read Goethe's understanding of the *daemon* in light of Plato's, and the move from Goethe to Weber, as the very title of this dissertation suggests, is not so great.[41] As Nicholls describes it, Goethe's conception of the daemonic was like Socrates's in that it reminds us of "an outside, an uncontrollable excess or remainder, which exceeds the cognitive capacities of human reason, the ignorance of which may cause tragic consequences" (p. 262); and it is like Plato's because it affirms that the "progression from mythos to logos"—or an original account to a logical or scientific account—"is never complete, nor susceptible to completion (p. 269). Goethe's conception of the *daemonic,* most comprehensively described in his autobiography *Aus meinem Leben: Ditchtung und Warheit*, stresses the highly personal, non-rational, and exceptional quality of the *daemon.* The Platonic notion of the *daemon* includes this, but also, through the voice of Socrates, an appeal to sobriety and responsibility.

Another promising hinge between Plato and Weber is the nineteenth century Danish philosopher and proto-existentialist Søren Kierkegaard, particularly in his work *The Concept of Irony: With Continual Reference to Socrates.* Herein Kierkegaard claims that Socrates' *daemon* "was concerned only with particular situations and merely spoke warningly…The daimonian

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[41] Goethe died in 1832. Weber was born in 1864. Goethe's influence pervades Weber's work, including his notion of "ideal types" and his famous phrase "elective affinity," used in *The Protestant Ethic* to describe the relationship between the spirit of capitalism and the disposition formed by Protestant theology (cf. Rakau 2009).

was sufficient for Socrates, and with it he could manage…" (1989, p. 166). Kierkegaard goes on to suggest that "science and scholarship are right in ignoring such things; nevertheless, one who wants to understand an individual life cannot do so" (ibid). Here Kierkegaard is using different language and referencing a distinct person, yet his observation about Socrates's *daemon* resembles a point made in chapter 1: that it is understandable, at the moment, why educational decision-makers and educational scholars ignore students as particular persons. Yet it is not absurd, but wholly appropriate, that educators, each day, attend to students as particular persons, or (strange as it sounds) to attend to their *daemons*.

What is a *daemon*? Clearly for Plato it is not a demon, or evil spirit, and it need not signify baseness – the meaning Strauss was quick to ascribe to Weber. Is it a person's ideal? Is it a non-rational excess? A vitalistic excess? A rational admonition? A person's fate? Or, is it just a classical term revered by classicists? As Kierkegaard jokes,

> From time immemorial there has been a strong tendency to talk about [the Socratic *daemon*]…but the matter usually ends there. The curiosity that is titillated by mystery is satisfied by getting a name for it; profundity is gratified by having someone say with solemn countenance: 'What is there to say?'"

Kierkegaard then references one contemporary classicist bold enough to disenchant the entire mystery and chalk Socrates's *daemonium* up to "…a presentiment or a kind of fanaticism that to some extent had its roots in [Socrates'] vivid imagination and his delicate nervous system" (1989, p. 157-158). I mention these deflationary remarks because they capture relevant concerns about drawing this analogy. On the one hand, the comparison might not be clear because not much can be said about a mysterious classical entity/force like the *daemon*. On the other hand, there may be nothing to stop the term from being reduced to nonsense. Even still, the connection

between Plato and Weber on the *daemon* is not tenuous; Weber's own references to the *daemon* suggest an explicit connection.

2.4.2 Explicit Connections

The concluding lines of Weber's momentous lecture "Science as a Vocation" (first delivered in 1917) read as follows: "We must set to work and meet the "demands of the day"—humanely and vocationally. These are plain and simple, however, if everyone finds and obeys the daemon who holds the threads of his life" (2008, p. 52). As this conclusion quotes Goethe's aphorism, it likely references Goethe's conception of the *daemonic* too. There is nothing explicitly linking Weber to Plato in these last lines. Nevertheless, Plato's conception of inquiry is mentioned in the lecture, and sociologist Harvey Goldman (1992) interpreted "Science as a Vocation" as Weber making an appeal for Platonic education aimed at self-mastery, and to charismatically revealing to students "the battlefield on which they must do combat" (p. 79). Goldman's interpretation combines, I think, the right mixture of revelation and realism. Yet it is a generally uncharitable interpretation. Goldman's underlying purpose, we might say, is to depict Weber as a fanatic with a delicate nervous system.[42] However, it is uncharitable to conclude that Weber's intention as an educator was to charismatically compel students to step onto a battlefield. Recalling the Herr V. passage, Weber's intention was clearly not to incite a battlefield mentality through the force of rhetoric. His concern was for Herr Voigt's independent

[42] Radkau's biography (2009) takes this suggestion to its furthest logical conclusion. He provides a psychoanalytic interpretation of Weber's use of the term demon, and chalks it up to a metaphorical way to describe sexual dysfunction: "Were they for the Webers an interchangeable metaphor, a mere code word for 'nocturnal disasters'?" Radkau also interprets Marianne Weber's biography and her reference to the "demons" that tormented her husband's health. The latter likely refers to a Dostoevskian (or Christian) conception of demon, meaning malicious spirits. This use of the term is distinct from the Platonic conception *daemon*, which Radkau quickly defines as: "..the God-given inner voice pointing out the right path to man." (2009, ch. 7).

thinking and "dispassionate quest for truth," insofar as these played a formative role in shaping his identity. Or, put more generally, the Weberian educator hopes to provoke her students' active responsibility for the meaning of their actions in the world by echoing the demands of particular ideas. If heeding the demands of particular ideas is formative, then the educator's particular work plays a role in shaping her students' identities. But what is the object of a student's self-examination? The claim I am developing in this section is that the Weberian educator's conception of the student's self is best understood through an analogy to the Platonic *daemon.* This becomes clear by turning to Weber's most explicit reference to it.

The reference occurs in Weber's article "The Meaning of 'Value Freedom'" (1917), and will be quoted at length; this passage is crucial for the argument of this chapter and will be referenced throughout this dissertation. Weber writes,

> People's humdrum "everyday lives," in the truest sense of that expression, make them shallow precisely in that they do not become aware [of the fact] that irreconcilably antagonistic values are thus [in practice] mixed up with each other, partly for psychological reasons, partly for pragmatic ones. Above all, they do not *want* to become aware of [that fact]: on the contrary, they evade the choice between "God" and the "Devil," and the fundamental personal decision as to which of the conflicting values belongs to the realm of one, and which to the other. The fruit of the tree of knowledge, disturbing to human complacency yet inescapable, is precisely this [insight]: that we cannot avoid knowing about these conflicts, and must therefore realize that every single important act—and to an even much greater extent: life as a whole, if it is to be lived in full awareness and is not just to unfold like a natural event—involves a series of

> fundamental decisions through which the soul, as Plato [describes it], *chooses* its own fate—the meaning that is of its activity and being. (Weber 2014, p. 314)

The crux of this passage is the ineluctable necessity of what Weber called "value collision" in the social world, which he explicitly says should not be interpreted as relativism (ibid). Rather, it means that if we desire to know about the social world, and the meaning of our actions therein, "we cannot avoid knowing about these conflicts" (ibid). There is more than one impersonal standard to measure the correctness of action in society, and because these standards are mixed up, they become diffused throughout everyday life. In the "shallow" and "humdrum" activities of life, acknowledging value collision involves acknowledging what I have called the condition of confusion. Self-examination involves realizing one's complicity in the mix-up, and thinking about the ultimate meaning of one's obligations in the world against a condition of confusion. Here the connection between Plato and Weber on the *daemon* becomes unavoidable.

2.4.3 The Myth of Er

The passage above directly references Plato's Myth of Er, which occurs in book 10 of *Republic*. Here I make a strong claim. These lines must be understood in light of this myth, or they will be misunderstood (as I posit that Strauss misunderstands Weber above). Nevertheless, Weber's words are not equivalent with the myth. Although Plato and Weber are both concerned with guarding their readers from rushing into life confusedly, based upon an impression or preference that has not been sufficiently thought through, for Plato the impersonal standard is one of cosmic justice, whereas for Weber there are impersonal standards (plural), and to deliberate about them first requires confronting a condition of confusion: the mix-up of values spheres and the standards governing these spheres in everyday life. To support this claim, a brief description of Plato's myth is in order.

In Book 10 of the *Republic,* Socrates concludes his extended defense of the just life by telling a complex myth about a man named Er who died and visited the afterlife, and then returned to speak of his experience. In a climactic moment, Socrates relates how Er saw a collection of disembodied souls being given instructions by a prophet of Lachesis (the maiden daughter of Necessity). The prophet takes models of possible lives (*daemons)* from the lap of Lachesis and tells the souls that lots will be cast for the selection of lives. Chance thus enters the cosmic picture, for, presumably, receiving the first pick allows one lucky soul to choose the best possible life *(daemon*). Yet the prophet makes it clear: "Your daimon will not be assigned to you by lot, you will choose him ... Virtue has not master: as he honors or dishonors it, so shall each of you have more or less of it. *Responsibility lies with the chooser*" (emphasis added, Plato 2004, 617d-e). With the disorienting image of countless *daemons* in mind, and souls facing the necessity of making a choice, Socrates steps back from simply describing the tale to warn his interlocutor (Glaucon) about the momentous importance of this decision. This passage, for the sake of comparison, must also be quoted at length.

> Here, it seems my dear Glaucon, a human being faces the *greatest danger* of all, and because of that each must, to the neglect of all other subjects, take care above all else to be a seeker and student of that subject which will enable him to learn and discover who will give him the ability and the knowledge to distinguish a good life from a bad, so that he will always and in any circumstances choose the better one from among those that are possible. He must *calculate* the effect of all the things we have mentioned just now, both jointly and severally, on the virtue of a life, so as to know what the good and bad things are that beauty does when it is mixed with wealth or poverty and this or that state of the soul; what high and low birth, private lives and ruling offices, physical strength and

> weakness, ease and difficulties in learning, and all the things that are naturally part of the soul or can be acquired by it do, when they are mixed with one another. On the basis of all that he will be able, by considering the nature of the soul, to reason out which life is better and which worse and choose accordingly, calling worse the one that will lead the soul to become more unjust, and better the one that leads it to become more just. Everything else he will ignore. For we have seen, this is the best way to choose, whether in life or death (emphasis added, 618 b-e).

Plato's use of this strange account to conclude the *Republic* has given rise to much commentary.[43] Recently, philosopher Francisco Gonzalez (2012) claimed that the myth of Er illustrates human life in terms of its "fundamental opacity" (p. 272) and does not offer the philosopher a form of escapism or consolation, but rather "…the myth of Er is his nightmare" (p. 277). Weber's remark about "shallowness" and the "humdrum" nature of everyday life also calls attention to its opacity and confusion; Weber's view is that most prefer not to know about the meaning of their actions in the world because it is discomfiting. Such knowledge not only involves a threat to one's personal identity and confrontation with a difficult personal decision about whether to live ignorantly or pursue knowledge, but it also involves the alienating reality of living amidst people who feel at home, as it were, in ignorance. Yet it does not seem as though Weber is aiming to depict a nightmare. Read as an educator, if this dissertation is correct, Weber aims to provoke the need for active responsibility and the desire to live one's life insightfully—as opposed to preferentially or experientially.

Stephen Halliwell's recent "this-worldly" interpretation of the myth goes far in illuminating the comparison between Weber and Plato. Halliwell describes the myth as,

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[43] J.S. Morrison's article "Parmenidies and Er" (1955) is the most frequently cited Anglo-American study that I've come across.

> …a stark emblem of the inescapably self-forming consequences of ethical agency, a magnified image of how at every moment ("always and everywhere") the individual soul/person is intrinsically responsible for what matters most about its existence. Every action, we might thus say, brings with it its own "afterlife." Every choice makes us who we are; when we choose we activate (and become) something, and therefore cannot simply pull back from ourselves… (2007, p. 469).

Put another way, according to Halliwell, the myth is meant to be an imminent appeal for Glaucon to take active responsibility for his life – his *daemon* – as it is being formed, heeded, or neglected by his everyday actions. Halliwell's reading is strikingly similar to Weber's use of the myth in the above passage; both Plato and Weber saw everyday life as mixed up, and both Plato and Weber used this opacity to motivate readers to take an active responsibility for self-examination.

Yet, as mentioned above, there is an important difference between Plato and Weber. For Plato, insights about the best life do not accommodate plural standards of deliberation but *one* standard, and the encompassing value of justice. Socrates bids Glaucon to question his impulses and remain vigilant so he can sort through the Er-like confusion of everyday life and choose the best life. But the only means for sorting through the confusion, as Socrates presents the myth, is by minding the standard of justice that governs all persons—regardless of their ability to fool the majority, take an undue share of goods or privileges, and appear "just." Only the impersonal standard of justice can be used to measure the correctness of one's decision and evaluate the decisions of others. The divine agent's decree, "Responsibility lies with the chooser" (Plato 2004, 617d-e), is modulated through Socrates's warning to become an unequivocal demand for judging the merit of one's life according to this standard. "Everything else he will ignore. For we have seen, *this* is the best way to choose, whether in life or death"

(emphasis added, 2004, 618 b-e).

The worries about Weber's relativism—respectively described above as "nihilism" and "emotivism"—charge Weber with having *no* cognizance of impersonal standards. According to these charges, unlike Plato, Weber cannot warn his students to mind an impersonal standard because he is a relativist who does not recognize the existence of one impersonal standard that can encompass the whole of life. Consequently, Weber's appeal for living a self-examined life over and above a shallow and confused life is accused of lacking any criteria by which such a distinction can even be made. The most Weber can say, so the accusation runs, is: "Choose as best what you feel or experience as best—whether that means the base *daemon* of a tyrant or the profound *daemon* of Socrates. Responsibility lies *solely* with the chooser, and which life the chooser *prefers* or *experiences* as best or worst, will be best or worst for him or her. There is nothing more to say about the matter. We must preserve a thoughtless space for the individual's private preferences and experiences lest our thinking abet a totalitarian regime." Yet, as suggested above, this caricature seems to advocate the opposite of Weber's views.

2.5 Self-Examination Against the Condition of Confusion

Much like Plato, Weber wants to impress upon his readers the demand to take an active responsibility for the meaning of their lives, or, in Halliwell's words, the "…inescapably self-forming consequences of ethical agency…" (2007, p. 469). Forcing a dichotomy between one impersonal standard and base relativism might be an expedient way to critique Weber, but it is not a useful device when the intention is to understand what Weber is actually saying. Weber's meaning in the above passage is that shallowness prevails in everyday life when people do not care to see that different value spheres (and the impersonal standards governing their conduct of life) are thoroughly mixed up. To imagine what Weber is after, consider how the values of a

political party might be thoroughly mixed up with economic and religious values, such that the party's message becomes political (when convenient), economic (when convenient), and religious (when convenient). Weber's pronouncement would be that such a party is shallow. To continue with this example, without forcing this or that political party upon his pupil, Weber is concerned that a person will rush to identify with said party based upon a "momentary impression" (Weber 1975, p. 154), and that this person's interest in maintaining the integrity and coherence of his chosen "political identity" will lead him to stick with shallowness rather than uncovering the confusion of purposes inherent in his political party. In this case, the impersonal standards governing the correctness of action are plural and mixed up. The apparent coherence of the political party betrays a condition of confusion. If there were one impersonal standard clearly governing a society, there would be no need for a Weberian education: indeed, social life would "unfold like a natural event" (Weber 2014, p. 314). But, looking around with open eyes, this does not seem to be the case. It is more nearly the case that the confusion, the mix-up of values, prevails. The person who is attentive to this social fact, and examines the meaning of his life by first confronting it, is thus prepared to understand whether the meaning and obligation of his life has been examined correctly or incorrectly; this person is prepared, in other words, for profound self-examination. Recognizing the condition of confusion, according to a Weberian philosophy of education, is thus a prerequisite of self-examination.

2.6 Conclusion

Focusing largely on Weber himself, I argued in this chapter that the Weberian educator uses the confusion of impersonal standards in society—what I have called a condition of confusion—to help students distinguish between working ideas about the ultimate meaning of their obligations in the world and merely having subjective experiences or preferences about

them. Refuting the idea that Weber espoused a relativism incapable of distinguishing correct ideas about a person's life from mere preferences, I then turned to Weber's description of his indirect pedagogical approach with Herr V and claimed that Weber's conception of the object of a student's self-examination is best understood through an analogy to Plato's *daemon* as conveyed in the Myth of Er. Noting the parallels between Plato and Weber, I observed that Plato set justice as an impersonal standard for judging the correctness of one's life, while Weber assumes that mix-up always prevails in social life and does not adopt a perspective *sub specie aeternitatis,* a view from the perspective of eternity, but first bids students to encounter an everyday condition of confusion; acknowledging it prepares a person for profound self-examination.

In conclusion, I suggest that the stark contrast between Plato's promotion of an impersonal standard of justice and Weber's initiation to self-examination via a condition of confusion must be qualified. Consider perhaps a striking moment in the myth of Er. The first lot is drawn. The first soul, with the option of the best life, rushes forward and impulsively chooses a tyrannical life that involves "being fated to eat his own children, among other evils" (Plato 2004, 619b). Interestingly enough, this soul had previously lived his life "in an orderly constitution"—imbued with excellence and virtue—perfectly governed, we can imagine, by an impersonal standard of justice. Yet this soul, says Socrates, had only known "virtue through habit but without philosophy" (619b). Thus the soul, despite receiving the first lot and despite being habituated to a just lifestyle, chooses the *worst* life amidst the great confusion of the afterlife, and 'he' does so precisely because 'he' did not "adequately examine everything" (ibid). In this scene, at least, Weber and Plato are in complete agreement. Acknowledging a condition of confusion prepares a person for self-examination and a "dispassionate quest for truth;" for both

Weber and Plato, it seems, motivation does not lie with the presence of a single, impersonal social standard governing society, but with the condition of confusion and the worry about living amidst it irresponsibly.

For the Weberian educator, *one* impersonal standard determining the validity of a student's insight about the "meaning of his life" is not given in advance. What is given in advance, as Weber and Plato seem to agree, is a condition of confusion, which can be readily seen in social life. Interestingly enough, it can also be *foreseen* as students work particular problems. Along with simply getting an algebra problem wrong, as mentioned above, a student can get it right but do so shallowly and thus subtly abet social confusion. Although the student may earn a high score, which may entitle him to a share of scarce resources, the student works by rote in a specialized domain. Ideas to not arise; formation is a matter of external adjustment. At the end of the day the student is not formed by heeding the demands of ideas, but by the shifting tones of subjective experience.[44]

Strangely enough, while working particular problems in a specialized domain, a social condition of confusion prevails here too. Consider, for instance, the conflicting values and purposes mixed up in the objectives of standardized tests. The strategies and shortcuts designed to enable students to "get the answers" superficially "right" mirror the strategies and shortcuts for success in social life: the political parties, universities, artists, philanthropists, and religious figures who get it "right," but do so superficially, without a clear idea of what they are doing, as if based upon a series of momentary impressions. Thus, strangely enough, deliberations about the

[44] Such an impoverished conception of education is powerfully illustrated by a passage from Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" in Book VII of the *Republic,* where he describes the prisoners distributing honors and prizes to those who are "sharpest at identifying the shadows as they passed by…and best able to remember which usually came earlier, which later, and which simultaneously; and who was thus best able to prophesize the future…" (Plato 2004, p. 516c).

meaning of one's obligation in the world *as well as* ideas about algebra can arise against the condition of confusion. Contemporary educational institutions seem to rest content with inhabiting a space of thoughtlessness: just as "the comprehensive doctrines of most people are not fully comprehensive" (Rawls 2001, p. 197), so most students' academic proficiency is applauded for being merely proficient. Aiming to provoke an active responsibility for particular ideas, the Weberian educator strives to prioritize the practice of education. She seeks to echo the demands of ideas and teaches with the hope that her voice will echo into the student's future: "This is not an algebraic problem, assuredly, but I know you from watching you work, and I urge you to keep working this problem until you get it right." The Weberian educator thus resists the shallowness of social life, even by teaching a specialized subject, by waking students up to demands of particular ideas, with the hope of them becoming wide-awake and reflective persons.

Chapter 3:
Questioning the Cause of Wide-Awakeness

3.1 Introduction

When habituation is cast as mechanical or mindless, it makes good sense to celebrate what Weber called the charismatic aspect of education: an education that *awakens* students to the world around them and distinguishes them from an otherwise somnolent condition. Alfred Schutz, an important critic and developer of Weber's work, called this "wide-awakeness" or "an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements" (1963, p. 213). The term wide-awakeness gained popularity in the field of philosophy of education through the work of Maxine Greene. It is no stretch to say that an education for wide-awakeness captures Greene's aesthetic and existentialist approach to philosophy of education.[45] At some points, Greene describes individual responsibility as a wholly undetermined phenomenon: "The person who chooses himself/herself in his/her freedom cannot place the onus on outside forces, on the cause and effect nexus" (1988, p. 5).[46] For Greene, the free choice of the wide-awake teacher or student is admirably estranged and gains distinction by being disassociated from those who inhabit a sleepy, confused social condition.

Examining Greene's conception of wide-awakeness in light of Weber's conception of education, I suggest that Greene's work can be read as an ally in the cause of defining a Weberian philosophy of education. Both Weber and Greene hope the educator will awaken students from the ways they have been unreflectively habituated by the social world. "In a great

[45] Greene quotes Schutz in *Landscapes of Learning* (1978, p. 163).

[46] This may not be Greene's summative conception of freedom. But whatever it is, it is sorely complicated by her attempt to synthesize an existentialist conception of freedom, primarily from Sartre, with aspects of Dewey's philosophy of education. The two views are incompatible. Dewey does not think the self can be neatly distinguished from the "cause and effect nexus."

majority of cases," Weber observes, "action goes on in a state of inarticulate half-consciousness or actual consciousness of its subjective meaning … In most cases … action is governed by impulse or habit" (1978, p. 21). Weber's description of the "great majority of cases" clearly differs from his description of an educated person. As described in the previous chapter, an educated person "finds and obeys the daemon who holds the threads of *his* life" (Weber 2008, p. 52); an educated person's soul lives in "full awareness" and "*chooses* its own fate—the *meaning*, that is, of its activity and being" (Weber 2014, p. 315). The educated person, in short, understands the meaning of his obligations in the world and is thus exceptionally wide-awake.

These ideas may prove inspiring for those who feel oppressed by the impersonal demands and general drudgery of modern educational institutions. Yet a fact that both Greene and Weber may be liable to ignore is that human beings are not wholly self-authoring subjects who can choose their fate and freely create themselves regardless of their prior habituation in the world. Put otherwise, all persons are unknowingly and profoundly shaped by the social world during their most formative years of life. This basic fact finds ample support in the "cause and effect nexus" (Greene 1988, p. 5). However, Weber does not sufficiently reflect upon the role of habituation in education and seems to denigrate habituation as mere unreflective behavior. This could be based on his upbringing.[47] And, to be clear, this is not good reason to fault Weber himself, because he did not engage in systematic work on education. But for me to neglect or avoid habituation would be a significant shortcoming of this project since habituation is a critical concept in any philosophy of education – and this dissertation aspires to develop a Weberian philosophy of education. To be more concrete, if an educator read this work and was persuaded to prioritize her particular educational practice because of it, yet came away conceiving of ideas

[47] See the first two sections of Jaochim Radkau's (2009) recent biography entitled "The Violation of Nature" and "Nature's Revenge."

about algebra problems or ideas about a student's calling as "demands of the day" arising outside of her student's history and the "cause and effect nexus" (Greene 1988, p. 5), then she would be misled. But in what respect would this educator be misled? In what respect is an educated calling foreseen irresponsibly if habituation is ignored?

Responding to this question is necessary for advancing my argument. An educated calling does not simply mean a person taking active responsibility for ideas arising from self-examination, determining his *daemon* against a condition of confusion prevailing in the social world, and being wide-awake to and for *himself*. It also involves taking an active responsibility for *causes*, which are practical and demand work. According to Weber, the achievement of personality does not occur through self-discovery, but through serving causes: moral tasks demanding humility. As Weber states in "The Meaning of 'Value Freedom'" (1914):

> …one would wish that, in particular, the generation which is now reaching [adulthood] will again, more than anything else, get accustomed to the idea that "being a personality" is not something that one can set as a deliberate goal, and that there is only one way in which one can (perhaps!) become [a personality]: by committing oneself unreservedly to a "cause" whatever [that cause] and the "claim of the day" entailed by it may look like in the individual case (2014, p. 307).

I hope the previous chapter has convinced readers that Weber was not a nihilist or emotivist, and thus his meaning should not be understood as a "cause" to maximize one's preferences. For Weber, as Wolfgang Schluchter observes, "Persons of true moral conviction passionately devote themselves to a suprapersonal cause in which they have faith without losing themselves completely in the process" (1996, p. 97). Although Schluchter's line does not suggest Weber's

view of a moral "cause" can be reduced to self-deceived nihilism, nor that a cause should consume a person's identity, it is difficult to read this passage and not worry that Weber's remark about "personality" being formed by heeding the demands of a cause is nothing more than advocacy for fanaticism. The concluding lines of the last chapter may have suggested something similar. The educator who echoes the demands of ideas about algebra sounds fanatical; she sounds like the sort of teacher who denies the reality of her students' home lives or personal problems: the sort of teacher who zealously teaches algebra as if her students' lives and moral characters depended solely upon it.

The aim of this chapter is to connect Weber's denigration of habituation and this worry about fanatical devotion to a cause. I argue that an education is liable to mis-educate students if it espouses an unreserved commitment to a cause that proceeds by forgetting its relationship to one's habituation or the "cause and effect nexus" (Greene 1988, p. 5). My argument, however, does suggest that educators today must think about habituation as an ultimate or basic educational concept, like Aristotle, who famously claimed "It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference" (Aristotle 1995, p. 11743, 1103b25-26). Instead, it means that the Weberian educator who hopes her students will heed the demands of ideas must acknowledge that reflection upon her students' habituation is a necessary part of echoing *their* demands of the day, lest a student's commitment to an algebra problem *or* to a moral cause be encouraged to proceed irresponsibly.

Ultimately I will argue that a Weberian philosophy of education provides an ideally insufficient but non-ideally sufficient means for reflecting upon habituation's role in education. Nevertheless, the majority of the chapter will be given to developing a critique of a Weberian

philosophy of education: or, more specifically, to fleshing out the idea that fanaticism results from the neglect of habituation.

Because this is a blind spot in Weber's own work, I will push Weber and the Weberian educator to a secondary role for the majority of this chapter in order to develop the problem through a variety of other sources. I begin by introducing the modern propensity to neglect habituation through British philosopher Michael Oakeshott's (1962) essay "The Tower of Babel." Herein, Oakeshott argues that a moral education should involve both habituation and reflection, but that the West emphasizes philosophical reflection over habituation. According to Oakeshott, much like the biblical myth of the "Tower of Babel," a modern moral education—involving a wide-awake pursuit of moral ideals—lacks a foundation in common habits and is thus liable to collapse into a crisis of moral "languages." What Oakeshott takes to be a sufficient moral education will then be briefly fleshed out by turning to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*—a series of lectures where preferably habituated students are provided with rational instruction on the principles of their habituation. Then, what Oakeshott takes to be the crisis of modern moral education will be advanced by turning to Friedrich Hölderlin's *Hyperion*—a *Bildungsroman* in which the main character reflects upon his moral formation as a tension between reconciliation with the social world (inspired by natural beauty) and fanatical revolt against the social world (inspired by the desire for a better world). Together these admittedly strange bedfellows (Oakeshott, Aristotle, and Hölderlin) will help to explain the educational problem of neglecting habituation and draw out the connection between this neglect and fanaticism.

I respond to these problems by explaining that a Weberian philosophy of education necessarily proceeds from a modern person's non-ideal habituation. This dismisses an

Aristotelian reverence for habituation (which is based upon grounds that should give rise to moral indignation). A Weberian educator, therefore, meets youth as they have been habituated (vs. *should* have been habituated). The "demands of the day" are thus encumbered by a non-ideal habituation. But this does not mean that educational practice cannot be prioritized. It simply means that a student's habituation is not eliminable; it must become subject to reflection as understanding one's own habituation provides a solid undergirding for meeting the demands of ideas and moral causes. In conclusion, I will argue that a Weberian philosophy of education gives educators responsible vision for serving a moral cause in modern society because it encourages acknowledgement of limitations, including its own. I begin by turning to Michael Oakeshott's work.

3.2 Oakeshott's Challenge

Oakeshott's essay "The Tower of Babel" (1962) does not purport to do more than diagnose the malformation of moral life in contemporary Western civilization (p. 60). Oakeshott claims that its form is "unavoidable," but that its diagnosis can help us to, as he states, "know its defects and feel its necessity" (p. 79). That Oakeshott associated moral life in modern society with the biblical myth of the "Tower of Babel" suggests he found its defects to be particularly immense and its necessities tragic. As the reader may recall, in this myth (Genesis 11:1-9), the early inhabitants of the earth banded together to build a tower to heaven. The project was facilitated by the fact that the builders spoke the same language and were inspired by the promise of inhabiting a better world (i.e., heaven). But God disrupted the builders' project by causing them to speak different languages. "Therefore [the tower] was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth" (Genesis 11:9). As Oakeshott interprets the myth, the responsibility for this chaotic outcome falls upon the builders' shoulders, for they chose to

sacrifice a common life together in order to dwell in heaven, or, as Oakeshott describes it, to seek "perfection as the crow flies" (p. 59). The very nature of their project resulted in a "chaos of conflicting ideals" (p. 59). Oakeshott uses this provocative image of a fallen condition (incidentally, post-Eden) to characterize the modern form of moral life.

Prior to explaining how this myth poses a challenge to Weberian philosophy of education, it is interesting to note that the aftermath of Babel is similar to what I described as a the condition of confusion in the previous chapter and Weber describes as value collision: "the various value systems in the world are in unresolvable conflict with each other … if we take pure experience as our starting point we arrive at polytheism" (Weber 2008, 44). Additionally, it is interesting to note that Oakeshott's intention to show that the defects and necessities of contemporary morality are "a misfortune to be made the best of" resembles Weber's desire in "Science as a Vocation" to help his youthful audience understand uncomfortable realities and the spiritual limitations of the age in order to better meet "the demands of the day" (2008 p. 52). Later I will exploit these similarities in my response to what I call "Oakeshott's challenge." But now, I turn to the challenge itself.

Unlike Weber's condition of confusion described above, Oakeshott argues that there *is* life before social confusion (or Babel). However, his argument is not made by recourse to an Arcadian society where inhabitants sing hymns in a common tongue, but to an ordinary upbringing that inculcates shared habits and affections, and thereby forms the dispositional basis for subsequent activity. Weber's standard of confusion, Oakeshott would claim, neglects the fact that habituation inevitably occurs prior to a person's conscious decision to take an active responsibility for understanding the meaning of his obligations in a state of social confusion.

As Oakeshott reminds us,

> We acquire habits of conduct, not by constructing a way of living upon rules or precepts learned by heart and subsequently practiced, but by living with people who habitually behave in a certain manner: we acquire habits of conduct in the same way as we acquire our native language (p. 62).

Just as language acquisition does not involve children memorizing rules and making existential choices about, say, the authenticity of grammar, Oakeshott suggests that the child's initial moral education does not involve children making existential choices in a context of value pluralism. Instead, the child's initial education involves adjusting to the world as a dwelling—what Oakeshott describes as "making oneself *at home* in the natural and civilized world" (emphasis added, p. 62). The condition of confusion may falsely assume that the human condition is always *homeless*.

Now it might be objected that a child's experience differs from a mature realization that relevant distinctions, fragmentations, and conflicts are the true stuff of taking active responsibility for the meaning of one's life. To heed the demands of ideas, and to "meet the demands of the day," for Weber meant a person must recognize the mix-up and conflict of values and then maturely deliberate upon which values will be "god ... and which the devil" (Weber 2008, p. 45). Oakeshott partially agrees with Weber. A complete moral education must involve intellectual training—including training in the nature of moral ideals, the organization of these ideals, and the "art of selecting appropriate means for achieving the ends which our education has inculcated" (p. 67). Oakeshott calls this aspect of moral education "reflective," and affirms that a morally educated person is "something of a philosopher and something of a self-analyst" (p. 68). Yet the very reason Oakeshott likens contemporary moral life to the Tower of Babel is

because reflective morality is foolishly sought as the *grounds* of moral life and personal identity. Like the characters in the myth who strove to dwell in heaven and yet ended up losing the linguistic basis of their common life, the form of contemporary moral life bids people to elevate reflective morality while belittling habituation: the common experience of being raised to dwell in the natural and social world. The result of prizing reflective morality, as Oakeshott sees it, is moral life marked by a condition of confusion: "constantly or periodically suffering the ravages of the armies of conflicting ideals, or (when these for a time have passed) falling into the hands of censures or inspectors" (1962, p. 72). Thus, exhibited either through fanatical convictions or a bureaucratic application of general rules to particular contexts, the modern form of moral life militates against our given capacity to be at home in the world.

To provide an initial gloss of Oakeshott's challenge: a Weberian philosophy of education's wrongly treats habituation, or the unavoidable *grounds* of education, as though it can be surmounted by ideas. Furthermore, Oakeshott's essay challenges the argument of this dissertation, where I purport to defend the fundamental obligation to prioritize the practice of education. Oakeshott would point out that, by only considering the demands of ideas, I end up neglecting habituation, which constitutes the earliest concern of educational practice. The argument of this dissertation, resting heavily upon the formative power of heeding the demands of ideas and thinking independently, promotes just another version of "seeking virtue as the crow flies" (p. 69). Later I will argue that a Weberian educator who strives to provoke her student's active responsibility provides sufficient educational means for coping with the habituation that Oakeshott describes as our "fallen condition." First, though, I would like to strengthen Oakeshott's challenge by fleshing it out with two additional sources.

There is a prominent moral theory in Western tradition that Oakeshott's essay overlooks.

Oakeshott claims that a sufficient moral education involves "moral habit supplemented, but not weakened, by [an] education in moral ideology" (1962 p. 71). He concludes his essay with a hurried summary of classical and medieval moral traditions, hoping to show that moral education in Western civilization has been (save for a few historical outliers) a nearly continuous pursuit of reflective morality. This summary is then used to support his claim that "we are for the most part *dominated* by [reflective] morality" (p. 75). I find Oakeshott's historical summary to be largely unpersuasive, not least because it overlooks Aristotle's virtue ethics, which actually comprise what Oakeshott would deem a sufficient moral education.. And, parenthetically, the promise of virtue ethics is abundantly clear in the field of philosophy of education, where neo-Aristotelian theories of moral education are gaining clout (cf. Curren 2013, Kristjánsson 2012). For the purpose at hand, Aristotle strengthens Oakeshott's challenge by substantiating Oakeshott's conception of a sufficient moral education.

3.2.1 Learning to Flourish in Ancient Greece

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* were written as lectures delivered to young men belonging to the Athenian elite. These lectures provided the young men with a rational account of their common habituation. By noting the social distinctions that Aristotle makes throughout the lecture, it becomes clear that Aristotle assumed a common habituation. The young men Aristotle addressed had been raised to govern households and polities. Their habituation thus gave them a social distinction that others lacked. Those who governed households and polities were not raised to be women (who lacked requisite power), or slaves (who lacked deliberative capacity), or money makers (who engaged in an activity "undertaken under compulsion" (Aristotle 1995 1732[1096a6])), or the masses (driven by pleasure and "prefer[ing] a life suitable to beasts" (1995 1731 [1095b20]). A shared habituation was an

assumed and necessary condition of these young men's moral education, but it was not sufficient.

To achieve moral excellence, the young men had to engage in excellent action. Excellent action, as per Aristotle, is action that avoids excesses and deficiencies, and proceeds from deliberations over the "relative mean" of any given action. Such deliberation requires more than habituation. The relative mean of an action is "determined by reason in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine it" (1995 1748 [1106b36-1107a2]). Direct instruction on the rational principles of excellent action facilitates deliberation. The rational instruction Aristotle provides in *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, however, is not intended to replace the important work of habituation (which occurs in childhood), nor is it intended to serve as a surrogate for excellent action. Aristotle was keen to recognize the common deficiency of mistaking a philosophical education in rational principles for excellent action. As he observed,

> most people do not [engage in excellent action], but take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do. As the latter will not be made well in body by such a course of treatment, the former will not be made well in soul by such a course in philosophy (1995, 1746 [1105b12-17]).

This resonates with Oakeshott's message in "Tower of Babel." The form of contemporary moral life, Oakeshott essentially says, is like a course in philosophy where students equate reflecting on moral ideals, or causes, with moral action. But again, more than moral ideals are necessary for excellent action.

Aristotle illuminates this point by drawing a psychological distinction between

"continent" and "virtuous" action. This psychological distinction helps flesh out what Oakeshott takes to be a sufficient moral education, and provides further reason to deem insufficient an education in reflective morality.

To introduce this distinction, imagine a particular Athenian youth had not been appropriately habituated, but still managed to enroll in Aristotle's *Lyceum.* Rather than being habituated to respond to pleasures and pains nobly, i.e. like a virtuous person, this youth was raised to see excessive luxury as a high good. Aristotle would not deny that this unfortunate youth could learn the principles of excellent action and commit them to memory like a catechism, or like laws designed for people without proper habituation (cf. Aristotle 1995, 1163b-1172a). Yet without proper habituation, Aristotle observes that this youth's will to follow the rules of virtue will be divorced from taking pleasure in virtue. The youth's action will evince psychological division as a result of his flawed habituation: he will simultaneously feel a surge of covetous desire at the sight of a luxurious home *and* feel the force of a rule bidding him to beat back the temptation. To act nobly under these circumstances means engaging with the world only according to cognitive obligations—that is, as if virtue were wholly a matter of moral reflection. Aristotle calls this continent action, which is inferior to virtuous action. As John McDowell (1998) elaborates,

> [a] continent person has a flawed approximation of practical virtue. He has, in a way, a correct conception of doing well, and applies that conception to particular predicaments; but he reveals that his possession of full-fledged practical wisdom is only partial, by the fact that he is swayed by the attractions of alternatives to what he knows (in a way) to be doing well. (p. 128)

Unlike the continent person, the virtuous person would not be tempted by excessive luxury. His

action would not commence as a conflict between desire, deliberation, and action. The virtuous youth would take an appropriate pleasure in disdaining excessive luxury. This disdain, as Julia Annas describes it, would effortlessly flow forth as an "unforced expression of the person's reasoning and feelings, in harmony with the rest of [her] character and structured system of goals" (2008, p. 29). Excellent action thus engages the virtuous person in the activity of flourishing, while continent action (mere rule following) engages a person in psychological frustration: a discord between desires issuing from one's flawed habituation and obligations issuing from rational reflection.

Incorporating Aristotle's distinction into what I have called Oakeshott's challenge, the Weberian educator who hopes students will learn to "meet the demands of the day," and heed ideas about the meaning of their obligations in the world, may only be hoping for continence. Continent action, to be clear, is not *vicious* action. It is thus a limited achievement. But continent action is not virtuous action and does not contribute to a person's flourishing. Only a flawed philosophy of education would extol the merits of a second-rate psychological state like continence.

This brief turn to Aristotle's virtue ethics provides a glimpse of how Oakeshott's understanding of a sufficient moral education might be fleshed out. Far more could be said about Aristotle's conception of moral education. Assuming we can read past the instances of racism, sexism, elitism and priggishness in Aristotle's work, there is hope for a sufficient moral education contained therein. Perhaps the possibilities of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics provide reason to acknowledge the general point of Oakeshott's "Tower of Babel," but also to dismiss his pessimistic view that moral life today is a "misfortune to be made the best of." For what is best—human flourishing—can be realized today.

I, however, am skeptical about the promise of virtue ethics in modern society. I do not understand how a person could be satisfied with his or her possession of virtue in our society, where injustice reigns. I also do not see how a virtuous person could avoid being reduced to continence or vice if presented with a confusing or a novel situation (as Plato portrayed in the previous chapter with the soul who won the first lot but chose to live a tyrannical life). My doubts will soon be made more explicit. For the moment, I want to continue developing Oakeshott's challenge. Having used Aristotle to elaborate upon what Oakeshott took to be a sufficient moral education, I now turn to Friedrich Hölderlin's novel *Hyperion* to flesh out the crisis between habituation and reflective morality described by Oakeshott.

3.2.2 Learning to Flourish in Modern Greece

Friedrich Hölderlin's novel *Hyperion* is a *Bildungsroman* in which the central character, a Greek poet named Hyperion (ca. 1773), recalls through a series of letters the formative influences in his life. The letters are addressed to a German named Bellarim. I recall one interpretation suggesting that "Bellarim" is Latinized name combining beauty and war. This interpretation, I think, lends itself to a headline summary of the novel: *Hyperion* is an epistolary novel that reflects on the failure of a "beautiful war." Read in light of Oakeshott's challenge, as I will do, the novel can also be viewed as a reflection on a failed moral education, or, more specifically, on the unresolved conflict between being habituated to be at home in the world and being inspired to enact a better world.

Hyperion begins his letters to Bellarim by describing his childhood education. His teacher, Adamas, cultivated in Hyperion a love for the classical world. As Hyperion describes,

> Adamas led me, now into Plutarch's world of heroes, into the magical land of the Greek gods; now he quieted my youthful impatience with arithmetic and geometry, now he

> climbed among the mountains with me—by day for fields flowers and woodland flowers … by night that we might gaze at the sacred stars above us, and understand them as men may (Holderlin 1990, p. 8).

These lines bear a tension between heroic aspirations and dwelling in the natural world. This tension is developed throughout the novel. Roaming the natural world with myths in mind provides the young Hyperion with an experience of the ancient world in the present: nature, *enchanted* and *unchanged*. But the social world, Hyperion comes to see, is no longer animated by noble deeds and divine graces. Due to utilitarian exigencies, for many people the loss of wholeness and heroism is not felt. This modern persona: "to demonstrate what an advanced thinker he was, would snap his fingers at Heaven and cry that he had never worried about the birds in the bush, give him the birds in the hand!" (1990, p. 15-16). Yet for Hyperion (and, incidentally, for Weber), the "bird in hand" approach is distressingly insufficient. A loss is felt. And from the place of loss, a conflict between two pressing obligations emerges: a heroic obligation to refuse habituation by a slavish modern society *versus* an aesthetic obligation to see society (however base) as encompassed by the natural world—"the changeless, the quiet, the beautiful" (1990 p. 3). Early in the novel, Hyperion recounts these conflicting obligations as follows:

> All things age and are rejuvenated. Why are we excepted from this beautiful circling of Nature? Or does it rule us, too? I should believe so, were it not for *one* trait that is in us—the gigantic striving to be all things, which, like Aetna's Titan, rages up from the depths of our being. And yet, who would not rather feel it within him, like seething oil, than acknowledge that he was born for the whip and the yoke? A raging battlehorse, or a workhorse with hanging ears—which is the

nobler (1990 p. 11)?

The tension between the "beautiful circling of nature" and "the gigantic striving to be all things" proceeds as a reflection upon the novel's two central characters. First there is Alabanda—who represents the "raging battlehorse," and whose desire for freedom is like "seething oil." Then there is Diotima—who represents rejuvenation and the "beautiful circling of Nature." Briefly examining the natures of Alabanda and Diotima sets the stage for a more profound understanding of the discord between learning to be "at home" in the world and striving to revolutionize it.

Hyperion sees Alabanda as a "Young Titan" amongst a "race of dwarfs" (1990, p. 17). Alabanda is nobly self-determined and exhibits an admirable distance from the slavishness of the present. Alabanda, for Hyperion, represents the possibility of heroism in modern Greece. But Alabanda is also an extreme character who gives vent to an eerie hatred of his present world. Consider a few lines from an impassioned speech Alabanda addresses to humanity in the presence of Hyperion:

> We do not ask if you are willing, you slaves and barbarians! You are never willing! Nor will we try to make you better, for that is useless! We will but make certain that you get out of the way of humanity's victorious career! Oh! let someone light a torch for me, that I may burn the weeds from the field (1990 p. 21).

Alabanda's passionate cause to realize a better world does not shy away from destruction. In fact, his duty to free himself from a base age demands destruction. We might say Alabanda provides an ideal type for fanatical devotion to a cause, but we might equally say that he provides an ideal type for wide-awakeness. He refuses to rest comfortably in a world where, as he judges, "to be happy means to be sleepy" (1990, p. 21). For this reason, we might say Alabanda personifies the initial worry that Weber's passion for moral causes makes him sound

like a fanatical educator: an educator of Alabandas. The worry about Alabanda is that his moral cause to realize a better world—as Hölderlin incisively sees—may be antithetical to flourishing in any world. Once "the field" has been cleared, the agents of destruction are left with the gloomiest of consolations: "They say that grapes grown on burned-out dead volcanoes yield no bad cider" (1990, p. 26). The prospect of celebrating a better world upon scorched earth provides a graphic illustration of how the fanatical pursuit of moral causes may involve not just overcoming a base social life, but also, more radically, the destruction of the natural world and the very context of life.

After departing from Alabanda—"with a mind full of wild contradictions"— Hyperion encounters the character Diotima. She helps Hyperion to forget his anxious reflections and reminds him of the enchanted natural world he first encountered as a child (1990, p. 47). Hyperion recalls Diotima: "Her heart was at home among flowers, as if it were one of them. She named them all by *their names*, or out of her love for them gave them new and more beautiful ones, she knew exactly which was the happiest season for each of them" (1990, p. 45). Diotima, a caring governess of nature, lovingly attends to pupils who bear no prospect of meaningful action. And, importantly for our purposes, it is Diotima—not Alabanda—who urges Hyperion to engage in the practice of education.

> Go back into Athens *once* again, and look not only at the ruins but also at the men who walk among them ... who console themselves with a merry dance and a pious tale for the infamous oppression that weighs upon them—can you say, 'I am ashamed to work with this material?' I think it can still be fashioned …You will be the teacher of our people, you will be a great man (1990, p. 72).

Diotima's lines inspire Hyperion to act. He joins Alabanda to fight in the Greek Revolution of

1773. This endeavor can be read as an attempt to reconcile the influences of Diotima and Alabanda, and thus to engage in a "beautiful war." At first, the effort realizes Hyperion's hopes: he introduces his troops to the noble ideas of antiquity while also leading them into battle. But ultimately Hyperion's "beautiful war" is an abysmal failure. Hyperion's pupils (troops) reveal themselves to be thieves and cowards. Diotima dies a flower's death (simply wilts); Alabanda joins a fanatical group called the "Agents of Nemesis;" Hyperion is left to wander, eventually settling down to live as a hermit, mulling over dissonant memories and kindling reflective desires as he writes letters—letters he perhaps never sends—to Bellarim.

Far more could be said about this weighty philosophical novel, particularly when it is read as an address to notable German philosophers (e.g. Kant, Schiller, Fichte, and Hegel) who watched the French Revolution with both enthusiasm and dismay, then proceeded to labor philosophically to explain away their dissonant feelings—thereby losing the event to reflection. For the purposes of this chapter, however, my claim is that Alabanda and Diotima deepen our understanding of the crisis of moral education described by Oakeshott.

Let us first note a common critique of rationalism shared by Hölderlin, Oakeshott, and Aristotle. Like Oakeshott and Aristotle, Hölderlin agrees that mere study provides an insufficient moral education. Evoking an image frequently used by Herder in *Another Philosophy of History* (2004), and also one that Kant (1963) uses to conclude his essay "What is Enlightenment,"[48] Hölderlin states early in the novel: "The state is the coarse husk around the seed of life, and nothing more. It is the *wall* around the garden of human fruits and flowers" (1990 p. 23). Later in the novel, Hölderlin returns to this image and associates the human intellect with a journeyman

[48] "As nature has uncovered from under this hard shell the seed for which she most tenderly cares—the propensity and vocation to free thinking—this gradually works back upon the character of the people, who thereby gradually become capable of managing freedom" (Kant 1989, p. 10).

"who constructs the fence out of rough timber as it has been sketched out for him and nails the sawed and planted posts together for the garden that *his master* intends to plant." Hölderlin judges, "The entire business of intellect is makeshift. By its ability to sort out, it saves us from folly, from injustice; but to be safe from folly and injustice is, after all, not the *highest level* of human excellence" (emphasis added, 1990, p. 68). These remarks provide another way to phrase what has already been said by Oakeshott and Aristotle. Philosophical analysis and reflection can play a contributing role in a person's moral education, but does not afford the height of human excellence, for achieving human excellence *first* requires learning to make "oneself at home in the natural and civilized world" (Oakeshott 1962, p. 62): habituation, or growing, so to speak, in the garden of "human fruits and flowers" (Hölderlin 1990, p. 23) is an aspect of education that "makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference" (Aristotle 1995, p. 11743, 1103b26).

Nevertheless, Hölderlin adds needed complexity to Oakeshott's sketch of reflective morality and an Aristotelian critique of continence. Recall that Oakeshott describes those who fanatically pursue moral ideals and the inspectors who engage in bureaucratic management as two instances of the same reflective morality. Hölderlin, however, notes a relevant distinction. The rationalist engaging in mere "fence work" for, say, the basic structure of a just state is quite different from a character like Alabanda, who passionately strives with all his being to realize his moral cause against the baseness of the present world. Alabanda's pursuit of a moral ideal is far more human. It involves *felt* convictions. Do these convictions arise from reflection? Perhaps they do. Yet it seems more apt to say that they arise from *awakening* to the fact that one's habituation has occurred in a troubled garden, so to speak. This awakening is not simply reflective, but is accompanied by a feeling of moral indignation that surges forth like "seething oil." Recall that Aristotle counts continence a second-rate psychological state, which does not

flow forth harmoniously but encounters dissonance and resistance. But what if what moral indignation against one's own habituation provokes the state Aristotle calls continence? Acting upon this indignation is not impersonal fence work but very personal fieldwork. Oakeshott's treatment of reflective morality as well as the Aristotle's demotion of continence seem to fly past the phenomenon of moral indignation, particularly which can arise from reflection on a troubled or deceptive habituation.

A further complexity that Hölderlin adds, this time to Oakeshott's description of a sufficient moral education, which I have identified as Aristotelian virtue ethics, is the suggestion that an Alabanda-like cause to overhaul society is never reconcilable with a Diotima-like flourishing. Actively refusing to accept the social world means realizing that the garden is troubled. Unreflectively flourishing in a troubled garden, and finding no cause to question one's own habituation is—it is at least plausible to suggest—what it means to be "sleepy." So a moral education that involves wide-awakeness to a cause may not lead to an Aristotelian flourishing, but rather seems to involve agents in realizing a strange virtue: the pleasure felt in willfully and rationally severing themselves from their prior habituation.

This pleasure accompanying wide-awakeness, which occurs as agents free themselves from a troubled habituation, is essentially an enlightenment idea. Alabanda's voice can be heard in the following remark Kant makes in the *Metaphysics of Morals:*

> What is it in you that can be trusted to enter into combat with all the forces of nature within you and around you and to conquer them if they come into conflict with your moral principles? Although the solution to this question lies completely beyond the capability of speculative reason, the question arises of itself; and if he takes it to heart, the very incomprehensibility in this cognition of himself must produce an *exaltation* in his

soul which only inspires it the more to hold its duty sacred, the more it is assailed. (emphasis added, 2006, p. 226).[49]

Hölderlin appreciates the noble sentiments of Kant's "sacred duty." But Hölderlin is also cognizant of its danger. Taken to the extreme, the "sacred duty" becomes a destructive exaltation against one's own habituation: "Oh! let someone light a torch for me, that I may burn the weeds from the field" (1990 p. 21).

If our natural habituation in childhood precedes our reflection upon moral ideals, then acting upon what Kant calls a sacred duty to engage in conflict against the internal and external forces in nature amounts to waging war upon our childhood. Kant, for one, was terrified of being taken for a child. His antithesis of enlightenment is "self-incurred tutelage" (which can also be rendered "culpable immaturity"), where "tutelage" or "immaturity" means the "inability to make use of [one's] understanding without direction from another" (Kant 1989 p. 3).[50] Weber, it seems, inherited this worry. To cite one of many examples, he deemed naïve optimists who saw science (*Wissenschaft*) as a means to happiness to be "overgrown children" (2008, p. 39).

Cast in this light, Oakeshott's challenge can be ultimately expressed as follows: It is foolish for any educator to encourage a student's cause that proceeds from a hatred of one's

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[49] A similar sentiment can also be discerned in Friedrich Schiller's essay "On the Sublime." Schiller writes, "The feeling of the sublime is a mixed feeling. It is a composition of melancholy, which at its utmost is manifested in a shudder, of joyousness which can mount to rapture and, *even if it is not actually pleasure,* is far preferred by refined souls to all pleasures. This combination of two contradictory perceptions in a single feeling demonstrates our moral independence in an irrefutable manner … two opposed natures must be united in us, each of which is interested in diametrically opposed ways in the perception of the object. By means of feeling for the sublime, therefore, we discover that the state of our minds is not necessarily determined by the state of our sensations, that the laws of nature are not necessarily our own, and that we possess a principle proper to ourselves that is independent of all sensuous affects" (Schiller 1966, p. 198).

[50] Kant's fear was first pointed out to me in a seminar at Georgetown University taught by Prof. Terry Pinkard (Spring 2009).

habituation and leads to destroying the natural and social world that made one's childhood possible. Aristotle shows that the psychology of this enlightenment conception of maturity amounts to celebrating continence at the expense of virtue. Hölderlin, while complicating the view of Oakeshott and Aristotle, can be used to show that moral causes for reforming the present world, taken to their fanatical extreme, sanction destruction of the natural and social world. Thus, insofar as a Weberian philosophy of education encourages the demands of ideas alone and extols, as Schluchter writes, "Persons of true moral conviction" who "passionately devote themselves to a suprapersonal cause…" (1996, p. 97), there is good reason to worry that the Weberian educator's neglect of habituation amounts to an endorsement of fanaticism.

3.3 Response to Oakeshott's Challenge

I readily grant that a Weberian philosophy of education is insufficient, particularly because it does not provide norms or precepts for habituating children. Nevertheless, I wonder what it means to set the aim of education as habituating persons to flourish in a non-ideal and pluralistic world, which would involve adjusting to a society that is, so to speak, a troubled garden? Although the contemporary resurgence of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics has helpfully drawn attention to the importance of habituation in moral education, and recalled important links between philosophy and psychology, my worry is that it has not sufficiently explained whether children can be habituated to *legitimately* flourish in the context of modern society. There seems to be a gap, that is, between the facts of flourishing and the norms of flourishing.

To convey this suspicion with a straightforward example, imagine that elementary school A is heavily funded and well staffed while elementary school B is the opposite. Imagine that the disparity between the schools arises for morally arbitrary reasons—the parents at elementary school A have more money or paler complexions. Further imagine that children from elementary

school A are habituated to flourish while children from elementary school B are (carelessly) habituated to flounder. Eventually, let us say, children from elementary school A grow up and learn about places like elementary school B, and come to encounter the sorts of people shaped by these conditions. The question arises: Could the people raised in elementary school A honestly claim they were justly raised to flourish when they realize, upon reflection, that they were raised in a society that arbitrarily allowed some to flourish and others to flounder? There is something unsettling about affirming flourishing at elementary school A in light of elementary school B. Just as we might suspect that Aristotle's Athenian pupils were not fully flourishing, but were being habituated to (at least a bit of) moral sleepiness because they were being habituated to deem themselves superior to others on troubled "natural" grounds, we might also affirm that students from elementary school A were habituated to flourish on similar (though far less explicit) grounds.

If we rule out the notion that people can truly flourish in an unjust society, and if we acknowledge that we live in an unjust society, then the running assumption of the educator must be that everyone's habituation (of course, to varying degrees) has been problematic (or damaged, as Adorno [2005] puts it). And if we choose to understand the meaning of our actions in a world we may not prefer but were nonetheless habituated to dwell in, we would all find ourselves confronted with the demands of inconvenient ideas, and thus in varied states of continence. Accordingly, as I see it, given the high likelihood of any student's non-ideal habituation, the educator's role must be to help students understand what is problematic—or incomplete—about their desires, convictions, and aspirations to act upon the world. Put another way, in order to prioritize educational practice, the Weberian educator – even the algebra teacher – would be obliged to provoke students to take an active responsibility for understanding the "demands" of

their flawed habituation, because ideas, even ideas about algebra, arise in the world. Depending upon the social conditions and the person, this may necessitate a critical departure from a student's childhood habituation. Yet the role of the educator is not simply to encourage such a departure, but also to provoke an understanding of what it means to depart from it. This is not as extreme as fueling the flames of Alabanda's convictions or as straightforward as awakening persons from their childhood or traditional upbringing. Nor is it merely intellectual "fence work." Rather, it involves an educator enacting a pedagogy that (eventually) helps students to understand the defects and feel the necessities of their non-ideal habituation, in order to help them better recognize and respond to their obligations in the world.

This is, in fact, Oakeshott's modest aspiration in the "Tower of Babel." Oakeshott aspires to write amidst—not past—a fallen condition. In this respect, Oakeshott's challenge compliments a Weberian education, for it encourages an awareness of the "misfortune" of a reflective moral life led in a world mark by a condition of confusion. This is a world that lacks common habituation and, I would add, cannot be comfortably dwelt in due to morally troubled grounds. Like "Tower of Babel," but perhaps with greater clarity, Weber as an educator did not provide norms or principles of habituation, but he was concerned with students critically reflecting on their habituation.

3.4 Subjective Culture and Weber's Account of Modern Habituation

In his lecture "The Meaning of 'Value Freedom'" (1914), Weber suggests that professors should consider how their own educational practice affects a generation that, as Weber described it, "has a pronounced predisposition to take itself [too] seriously" (2014, 307). What Weber means is there exists an excessive desire to treat every activity in life as an exhibition of the personality. It is not hard to convey Weber's concern. Modern advertisers cultivate this desire

incessantly.[51] They sell nearly every product on the basis of its amenability to the customer's unique personality (*my* education, *my* truck, *my* age-defying make-up). But it is less easy to explain why this desire is excessive, or (in other words) vicious. And it is unclear how educators ought to teach students habituated in a world that affords, at every turn, opportunities for personal style or personalization.

Without providing a full explanation, I suggest that part of the desire to personalize everything springs from the Romantic conception of the personality, where the world becomes significant as a *means* for disclosing a personal journey. This conception of the personality is developed in the genre of the *Bildungsroman*. The world disclosed to Hyperion, for instance, is oriented around his personal engagement in a "beautiful war." The Romantic personality – the youth of Weber's time, and perhaps now everyone in the modern West – retains a propensity to see the world as a grand and personalized reflection.[52] Perceiving the world as a grand reflection of the personality is not innate, however. It is the work of modern habituation, where "to be" is to be reflexively aware. Weber deemed this a vicious aspect of modern habituation because it reduces the achievement of personality to an exhibition of the self's quest. For this reason, Weber wrote the lines quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

> …one would wish that, in particular, the generation which is now reaching [adulthood]

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[51] See Arcilla 2011.

[52] Kierkegaard's observations in *The Present Age* seem to capture the problem nicely: "More and more people renounce the quiet and modest tasks of life, that are so important and pleasing to God, in order to achieve something greater; in order to think over the relationships of life in a higher relationship till in the end the whole generation has become a representation, who represent … it is difficult to say who; and who think about these relationships…for whose sake it is not easy to discover … [For instance] To go to school no longer means to be in fear of the master, or merely to learn, but rather implies being interested in the problem of education" (Kierkegaard 1962, p. 45).

> will again, more than anything else, get accustomed to the idea that "being a personality" is not something that one can set as a deliberate goal, and that there is only one way in which one can (perhaps!) become [a personality]: by committing oneself unreservedly to a "cause" whatever [that cause] and the "claim of the day" entailed by it may look like in the individual case (2014, p. 307).

Again, for Weber and for a Weberian philosophy of education, the term "cause" [*Sache*] means a serious, ethical task that a person is devoted to without vanity (Cf. Weber 2014, p. 492). In claiming that an education should not facilitate more opportunities to exhibit the personality, but should provide students with an understanding of moral causes and *their* demands, Weber is not advancing a simple version of reflective morality. Rather, he is concerned with how education can reorient a student's engagement with the world. This reorientation involves acknowledging the nature of one's non-ideal habituation, as well as the existence of "causes" in the world. Heeding the demands of causes, it might be said, re-habituates the desire to embellish or stylize the personality.[53] So how would the Weberian educator teach those who have been habituated to personalize reality? An answer lies within this dissertation. The algebra teacher who echoes the demands of ideas about algebra is not echoing something synonymous with her student's identity, but is echoing a task for it. Admittedly, it is difficult to see how the "demands" of algebraic ideas are continuous with the "demands" of causes in the world. But the person who works the demands of ideas is not primarily focused on displaying his personality, but exhibits devotion to the task at hand. To demonstrate this, I conclude by considering how the Weberian educator would instruct Hyperion as he engages in his cause: a beautiful war.

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[53] The difference between the former and the latter, we might say, is like the difference between a person who serves cancer patients in response to a moral task that defines their life versus a person who expresses their concern over cancer by purchasing a plate at a charity dinner.

The Weberian educator, to start, would guide Hyperion to see that, outside of himself, the notion of a "beautiful war" in modern Greece contains contradictions and inconvenient truths. For instance, fundamental contradictions exist between the means of flourishing and the means of social reform. These contradictions call for deliberation: Hyperion must decide which cause demands service. The Weberian educator, as illustrated in the Herr Voigt passage in chapter 2, would warn Hyperion about rushing into a cause because of a momentary impression. Hyperion's habituation, however, encouraged him to reconcile discordant values in the world by grandly projecting his personality upon the world. As a child, for example, his teacher Adamas led him up a mountain, and as the sun shone down upon "his devastated country, on his temple, his pillars," Adamas assigned him a cause and dramatically cried "Be you like him!" (1990, p. 10). The Weberian educator would lead Hyperion to see the limitations of this habituation, and how it distorts Hyperion's understanding of his cause because it does not proceed from a true understanding of the modern world. Yet the Weberian educator does not need to be brought in from outside the text; the lessons of the Weberian educator are contained in the novel itself.

3.5 Conclusion: Inconvenient Truths for the Weberian Educator

As the message of *Hyperion* is largely a reflection on the failure of a "beautiful war," and if Diotima and Alabanda are read as ideal types for the possibilities of flourishing and pursuing causes in the modern world, it becomes clear that Hölderlin —gutted, stuffed, and labeled as a Romantic poet—is a Weberian educator *par excellence.* Hölderlin does not sacrifice the felt demands of conflicting ideas to reflection, but imaginatively depicts the fundamental dissonance between a person's habituation and a person's desire to heed the demands of a moral cause. Consider the novel's final lines: "'The arteries separate and return to the heart and all is one eternal glowing life.' *So I thought. More soon*" (1990, p. 133). Recalling the line mentioned

above, beginning with the description of the "beautiful circling of nature," it is not difficult to interpret what comes next: "were it not for *one* trait that is in us—the gigantic striving to be all things, which, like Aetna's Titan, rages up from the depths of our being. And yet, who would not rather feel it within him, like seething oil, than acknowledge that he was born for the whip and the yoke?" (1990, p. 11). In *Hyperion,* Hölderlin radically identifies, challenges, and educates about the cause of wide-awakeness through a dissonant reminder of habituation: the importance of learning "to make oneself at home in the natural and civilized world" (Oakeshott 1962, p. 62). Without formulating laws for the non-ideally habituated, Hölderlin tempers the conviction of wide-awakeness with a portrayal of its extremes and its limitations. He challenges readers to have a better understanding of it. Indeed, Weber might describe this as providing an education for those who uncritically celebrate the merits of wide-awakeness, or (as this chapter has sought to demonstrate) as providing an education for those who are quick to reduce themselves and the world to cause and nothing more.

Hölderlin is a Weberian educator *par excellence*, as well, because his profound literary labors (which Weber would describe as possessing the "power of the artistic 'I will not let thee go'"[Weber 1975, p. 458])[54] show us how to apply an important principle of Weberian education to Weberian education—that is, he shows us how to subject an education advocating the importance of self-critique and inconvenient truths to its own lessons. Being disposed to self-critique strikes me as an indispensible lesson in a society where ideal habituation cannot be assumed and social life seems to proceed according to a sleepy, condition of confusion or as an

[54] The quote "I will not let thee go…" is a reference to Genesis 32:22-32, where the patriarch Jacob wrestles with God until the break of day. When God says "Let me go for day has broken," Jacob replies, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." God then renames Jacob "Israel"—"for you have striven with God and men, and have prevailed." The remark occurs in a letter Weber wrote to his sister describing his reaction to Stephan George's poetry.

outright “conflict of ideals.” Moreover, learning to find strength in the knowledge of one’s own limitations, because they truly exist, works against the prevailing vice of personalizing reality: naming (or burning) the flowers of the field as an exhibition of *my* name. Thus, while the purpose of this chapter has been to challenge and acknowledge the limitations of a Weberian education for its neglect of habituation and potential advocacy of fanaticism*,* it concludes by vindicating a Weberian philosophy education for the very reason that it encourages educators to be wide-awake to ideas that unearth its limitations.

Chapter 4:
An Educated Calling in Modern Society

> But we simply cannot promise a land of Cockaigne or a paved road in this world or in the next, either in thought or in action. And it is a stigma of our human dignity that the peace of *our* soul cannot be as great as the peace of someone who dreams of such a land of milk and honey.
>
> -- Max Weber[55]

> The attitude taken is often that of man living in an indifferent and hostile world and issuing blasts of defiance. A religious attitude, however, needs the sense of a connection of man, in the way of both dependence and support, with the enveloping world that the imagination feels is a universe.
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> -- John Dewey[56]

Introduction 4.1

In the introduction to this dissertation, I defined calling as an idea about the ultimate meaning of a person's obligations. In chapter 2, I explained how the Weberian educator conceives of the ideas arising from a student's self-examination, which I described through an analogy to Plato's *daemon*. In chapter 3, I explained how the Weberian educator conceived of the student's relationship to the world, both their *habitutation* and *causes* (or moral tasks) that arise therein. Throughout, the role of the educator remains unchanged. She echoes the demands of ideas and provokes students to take an active responsibility for heeding these ideas as the "demands of the day," while anticipating a student's educated calling. The central terms of a Weberian philosophy of education is an educated calling, which can be understood as taking an active responsibility for the ultimate meaning of one's obligations in the world. However, in the fiel of philosophy of education, this is not the most usual way of understanding the term "educated calling."

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[55] Quoted Weber 1975, p. 418. This line comes from a lecture that Weber gave in 1909 in Vienna during a convention held by the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, which later was published (and altered) as the article "The meaning of value freedom" (1917).

[56] Dewey 1960, p. 53.

Typically, an educated calling is understood to be a personally fulfilling and socially valuable *occupation*. Indeed, if there were a hierarchy of aims of education, then an educated calling, conceived as an occupation, would rank near the top. An educated calling, so defined, provides a clear response to what one philosopher recently described as the "one basic question" of philosophy of education: "To what extent can educating children for the common good be reconciled with educating them for their own good?" (Curren 2013, p. 233). John Dewey responds to this very question in a chapter entitled "Vocational Aspects of Education." Although Dewey sought to democratize Plato's conception of education, he states, "Plato … laid down the fundamental principle of a philosophy of education when he asserted that it was the business of education to discover what each person is good for and to train him to mastery of that mode of excellence, because such development would also secure the fulfillment of social needs in the most *harmonious way*" (emphasis added 2004, p. 296-297). A person engaged in his calling, as an occupation, discovers his own good and the common good simultaneously, and thus overcomes the discord between private and public flourishing. Social harmony, according to Dewey, is the direction of an educated calling.

Unfortunately, despite the great value of an educated calling, modern society does not appear attuned to social harmony. Modern society, as I will use the term loosely throughout this chapter, is a non-ideal society marked by complexity, profit motive, and injustice. To speak of educating all people for a calling today—that is, to speak of educating people as if their work will someday contribute to a socially cooperative project, whether they sweep floors or trade stocks—can quickly provoke wry smiles from those who recognize the non-ideal realities of modern society.

Given the present state of affairs, an educational aim better aligned with the direction of modern society might be to provide young people with a fair and equal opportunity to adjust to the needs of economic and political systems so that they could legally compete for material goods that enable them to maximize their preferences. If this educational aim were achieved, then maybe the idea of an educated calling could play a supporting role, as part of a story that would make the disparate outcomes of social competitions appear more holistic or purposeful. The story's message: "Together, we are *called* by the global economy to compete fairly and live reasonably." Given the realities of modern society, however, at some point it becomes remiss to continue telling students such a story. At a certain point it would be important to wake students up to aspects of modern society that have nothing to do with calling: for instance, complex and impersonal institutions, zero-sum competitions, the Hobbesian "State of Nature" underlying conventions of cooperation,[57] and so on. All these features of modern society belie the harmonious direction evoked by a story about calling. So, in the end, perhaps nothing of practical significance would be lost if the story were never told; and perhaps something of practical significance would be gained if contemporary philosophers of education took seriously the overly idealistic nature of their "one basic question" in the context of modern society. But the threat modern society poses to an educated calling, today, threatens the argument of this dissertation too. The continuity between a student learning to take an active responsibility for particular academic idea and taking an active responsibility for his fundamental obligation may also be undermined by the competitive realities of modern society.

The purpose of this chapter is to defend calling (used synonymously with vocation) as an educational aim. The problem inherent in this defense involves discerning the relationship

[57] I am grateful to Uday Mehta for drawing my attention to the Western assumption that conflict undergirds society in his course "Modern Social Theory" (Spring 2012).

between a person's educated calling and modern society—whether the term is defined as an personally fulfilling and socially valuable occupation or the ultimate meaning of a persons obligations. In either case, take it that an educated calling means more than an individual's preferred occupation, and thus is not reducible to a person's preference. First, because a person's calling might be voiced in opposition to his preferences; for instance, a prophet might be called to warn an unjust city of its imminent demise against his preference for its demise (cf. Jonah) or a teacher might be called to reevaluate her teaching methods against her preference to shift the blame elsewhere (cf. Hansen 1995). Second, because everyone cannot be called to do everything or one particular thing. Regardless of inflated notions of opportunity or highly desirable occupations, callings are neither equally distributed nor scarce like goods. Third, because calling bears social significance; whether a person heeds or ignores a calling bears consequences for society. But what does it mean to heed an educated calling in modern society? Or, expressed as the question this chapter will take up: How can education help persons to passionately discover and decide upon their calling while equipping them to discern that the realities of modern society seem to reduce calling to a fiction of the past?

I will argue that Weber's conception of calling (*Beruf*) supplies a timely and efficacious resource for addressing this question and advancing active responsibility as an educational aim. Rather than evoking images of a harmonious society, Weber's conception of an educated calling turns the inhospitable realities of modern society into a sounding board that intensifies the power and meaning of the concept. Weber provides educators with an understanding of what echoing the demands of particular ideas contributes to their students' callings in modern society.

Yet Weber's conception of calling is far from obviously desirable. It does not endorse a story about calling just to facilitate successful adaptation to modern society. Instead, Weber

assumed a condition of confusion and renounces using social harmony as a postulate for social inquiry and critique. By implication, his work challenges all abstract or imagined conceptions of the "common good." Contrary to the occupation-view of calling, as Weber understands it, a person pursuing a calling in modern society does not simply realize his "own good" in tandem with the "common good"; instead, those with an educated calling in modern society learn to strengthen and test their lives against antagonistic forces. Weber's vision of calling is predicated upon an individual's decision to heed calling *x* in a social condition marked by radical pluralism. As Bruun describes Weber's social vision, "the tense but necessary co-existence of fundamentally different value spheres, is not just a point of logic, but a fundamental existential fact for Weber" (2007, p. 38). While evoking an image of a harmonious society provokes wry smiles, talk of educating students to affirm a Weberian calling prompts genuine concern because it assumes that an educated calling must be affirmed in a non-harmonious state of affairs. This concern is particularly pronounced when the struggle is cast as existential and involves values—as opposed to our more familiar educational competitions for positional goods (*better* scores, *greater* prestige, *higher* salaries).

Weber's conception of calling enjoins us to entertain three unpopular ideas in educational scholarship. First, that dedicating oneself to a calling in the modern world demands heroism or courageous action in the face of exorbitantly powerful systems or pressures. Second, that dedicating oneself to a calling requires asceticism – particularly the renunciation of *total* flourishing. Third, that dedicating oneself to a calling requires devotion to a particular cause that places unconditional demands upon an individual's conduct of life, and thus, as Wolfgang Schluchter describes, "affects practical conduct, as it were, from within" (1996, p. 63). In sum, Weber's conception of calling seems to demand a worrisome combination of heroism,

asceticism, and devotion. Should educational practice be prioritized to help form students with a calling marked by these traits?

Supporting the argument of this dissertation makes it critical for me to defend Weber's conception of an educated calling. To make this defense, I will utilize John Dewey's understanding of calling.[58] Dewey, a prominent philosopher of education, advances a view of calling as occupation that is far less controversial than Weber's and continues to be lauded by scholars and educators today. I will begin by providing an extended reconstruction of Dewey's conception of calling as occupation, first defined in *Democracy and Education* (2004) and then religiously inflected in *A Common Faith* (1960). My initial purpose in turning to Dewey is to cast doubt upon his more palatable conception of calling by situating it in modern society in order to prompt consideration of Weber's less popular conception of calling, which, I will show, acknowledges aspects of modern society that Dewey chooses to underplay. After this consideration has been given, I will return to Dewey's work in order to pose two objections to a Weberian conception of an educated calling as a person's ultimate obligations: (a) the apparent gap between theory and practice and (b) its impoverishment of social experience. Ultimately my argument is that a Weberian philosophy of education can help us—including Deweyans—reaffirm the relationship between education and calling despite and given modern society.

4.2 Dewey: Occupation as God

In chapter 23 of *Democracy and Education,* Dewey defines vocation generally as "a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the

[58] John Dewey (1859-1952), whose life overlapped with Weber's (1864-1920), is generally considered to be the most important philosopher of education of the 20th century. It is possible that Weber knew of Dewey's work through his familiarity with William James' work, but Weber does not cite Dewey; Dewey cites Weber, but only in passing. Thanks to Axel Honneth for kindly sharing this information in an email exchange.

consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates" (2004, p. 294).[59] This definition collapses many dualisms that Dewey critiqued in previous chapters (e.g., "labor and leisure," "intellectual and practical studies," "individual and the world"). When these dualisms are collapsed, as Chris Higgins observes, "Dewey may have been able to sum up his entire philosophy of education with the single phrase 'vocational education'" (2005, p. 443). Vocation thus provides a key to Dewey's vision of the good life: socially significant activity that exercises a person's capacities with "the minimum of friction and the maximum of satisfaction" (Dewey 2004, 296). Vocation is thus one of education's highest purposes—the discovery of what a person is both "good at" and "good for" in a deeply meaningful and progressive sense. Ultimately, for Dewey, all callings collapse into the vocation of living. But how can a harmonious vocation of living occur amidst the dissonance of modern society—one marked by complexity, profit motive, and injustice?

For Dewey, schools provide a response to this question. Although modern societies may be hotbeds of private wants and public needs, schools need not be. As Dewey sees it, schools can "simplify," "purify," and better "coordinate" modern society (2004, p. 18-22). Educational institutions thus become, for Dewey, the crucial means for social progress and transformation. Although situated amidst modern society, schools can constitute in themselves a happier society—what Dewey elsewhere calls an "embryonic community" (1990, p. 18)— a society where there is harmony, where the vocation of all is "living," which includes both "intellectual and moral growth" (2004, p 298), where "every person shall be occupied in something which makes the lives of others better worth living, and which accordingly makes the ties which bind persons together more perceptible—which breaks down the barriers of distance between them"

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[59] This awkward sentence has been correctly transcribed.

(2004, p. 304). In short, even though schools are situated amidst modern society, schools can provide students with the experience of working in a harmonious society. The hope is that this experience will develop a habit for harmonious work in students, which will transform modern society when they become adults.

Inherent in Dewey's vision of harmonious society is an effort to antiquate traditional conceptions of heroism, asceticism, and religion. The true calling of the hero, for Dewey, is not to be extraordinarily strong or successful in personal quests, but rather to promote the common good. Similarly, the true calling of the ascetic is not to sacrifice his or her own flourishing to achieve a higher spiritual ideal, but rather to delay immediate gratification for the purpose of greater collective flourishing. And, finally, the true calling of the religious devotee is not to be "merely one who wears the cloth" (2004, p. 296)—that is, one who claims authority based upon a soon-to-be-outmoded, exclusive belief system—but rather to be one who promotes social growth in all spheres of life.[60] Dewey would dub *traditional* heroes, ascetics, and religious devotees as "monstrosities," because they cultivate themselves individualistically and one-sidedly. As he says, "No one is just an artist and nothing else, and in so far as one approximates that condition, he is so much the less developed a human being; he is a kind of monstrosity" (2004, p. 295). The very purpose of education, according to Dewey, is not to cultivate such monstrosity, or preserve its historical forms, but to remove whatever hinders the growth of "the infinite variety of capacities found in individuals" (2004, p. 297).

A curious feature of Dewey's discussion of vocation in *Democracy and Education* is that he never bothers to mention the religious etymology of the term. For Dewey, "vocation" and

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[60] Although Dewey acknowledges that religious leaders in modern society may be concerned with social reform, he claims that their "exclusive and authoritative position" *necessarily* compromises reform efforts (1960, p. 83). The activism of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X call this judgment into question.

"calling" are not words with a particular history, but flexible terms that can be readily exchanged with occupation.[61] Of course, occupation for Dewey is not merely a utilitarian activity that pays the bills and yields contentment to those who subscribe to the "bird in hand" approach to life. As Dewey defines the term in *The School and Society*, occupation is an activity whose "*end is in itself*; in the growth that comes from the continual interplay of ideas and their embodiment in action" (emphasis added, 1990, p. 133). The rationale behind Dewey's conflation of calling and occupation, along with his neglect of calling's etymology, can be surmised as follows: If modern society were simpler, purer, and more cooperative, there would be no need to distinguish between a higher calling and a lower occupation. The barriers would be removed. The plumber's work would advance culture and the philosopher would fructify the cultural value of fixing pipes. So, progressive thinkers can be excused when they casually shed "inconvenient aspects" and "historical encumbrances" borne by terms springing from particular religious traditions, for the progressive thinker's work is to locate and formulate evidence of the better society to come (cf. Dewey 1998, p. 403).[62] How does this better society appear?

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[61] This negligence calls to mind Hans Joas' observation about Dewey's conception of religion: "[Dewey] skips over the particularism of each individual experience and lands, with his 'common faith of mankind,' in an empty universalism of the democratic ideal, the motivating force of which remains unfathomable" (2000, p. 123).

[62] These quoted phrases are borrowed from a line in Dewey's *A Common Faith:* "The logic involved in getting rid of *inconvenient aspects* of past religions compels us to inquire how much in religions now accepted are survivals from outgrown cultures. It compels us to ask what conception of unseen powers and our relations to them would be consonant with the best achievements and aspirations of the present. It demands that in imagination we wipe the slate clean and start afresh by asking what would be the idea of the unseen, of the manner of its control over us and the ways in which reverence and obedience would be manifested, if whatever basically religious experience had the opportunity to express itself free from all *historical encumbrances*" (emphasis added, Dewey 1960, p. 6).

Dewey's naturalistic metaphysics forbids talk of static ends of actions that exist in a realm beyond experience. All ends occur in experience; within experience they become ends of deliberation, "ends-in-view," "redirecting pivots *in* action" (Dewey 1922, p. 225). The suggestion of a final state of rest is anathema to Dewey's philosophical orientation. Nevertheless, in his essay *A Common Faith* (originally published in 1934), we find descriptions that help us articulate how Dewey imagined a healthier society. A healthier society, as Dewey foresaw, evinces religious devotion emancipated from traditional (supernatural) religions, and bears the following characteristics:

First, a healthier society is marked by a unity of purpose. Members worship—with "faith and ardor" (1960, p. 81)—natural and common ideals arising from common activities (e.g., art, labor, friendship, or really any activity that promotes personal and social growth) (p.51). Next, the practice of worshiping these ideals does not occur exclusively in churches, but extends "the sway of ideals" into everyday occupations (p. 57), i.e., by working worshipfully. Finally, because the most reliable method for identifying and extending the sway of ideals is through intelligent inquiry (specifically one modeled on the scientific method), Dewey's religious vision sanctifies the workers of intelligence. Collaborating together, a group of scientists, public officials, artists, and educators become the priests and prophets of a healthy society. Their work is to discover and sustain the common ideals that are worshiped in everyday activity. As Dewey describes the results of this group's work:

> The outcome would not be a gospel of salvation but it will be in line with that pursued, for example, in matter of disease and health. The method if used would not only accomplish something towards social health but would accomplish a greater thing; it

> would forward the development of social intelligence so that it could act with greater hardihood and on a larger scale (Dewey 1960, p. 77).

Following the true priests and true prophets, everyone in Dewey's healthy society is called to experimentally activate intelligence in a manner which "[bears] upon the *unification* of human desire and purpose" (emphasis added, p. 86). A healthy society is thus, for Dewey, a progressively reconciled society. But let us recall the question of this chapter: how does a person proceed in a Deweyan calling (now religiously conceived) when modern society is so unhealthy?

The answer has already been stated. Dewey takes the right education, in the right educational environment (or school), to be the primary means of social transformation. Social transformation is necessary, because relationships in modern society are obviously troubled. As a tireless and passionate social activist, Dewey acknowledged how easy it is to make "a severe indictment of existing social relations" (1960, p. 74).[63] However, Dewey saw that schools might be simpler, purer, and more cooperative. Thus, if a student is occupied in school experience, he or she will not seamlessly reproduce the problems of modern society. Transformation will occur. Students *permeated* by educational experience will *progressively* move modern society towards social harmony as they act in the world. And thus someday, so the hope runs, modern society will come to bestow school-like experiences. The selfish and bustling "Great Society" will become the unified and worshipful "Great Community" (cf. Dewey 1988). But can Dewey's grown-up students, who adapt to modern society, though habituated by the school's "embryonic community life" (Dewey 1990, p. 29), address the problem of this chapter?

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[63] The full quotation reads: "It is not difficult to make a severe indictment of existing social relations. It is enough to point to the war, jealousy, and fear that dominate the relations of nation states to one another; to the growing demoralization of older ties of domestic life; to the staggering evidence of corruption in politics, and to the egoism, brutality, and corruption that characterize economic activities" (1960, p. 74).

The trouble is that Dewey uses school experience to obscure the problem of describing in detail how grown-up students, habituated by school experience, interact with the hostile conditions of modern society. The very problem of occupying the lag time between the "Great Society" and the "Great Community" is finessed by a faith in the evidence of progress. However, the problem of this chapter—an education for a calling in modern society—ineluctably involves understanding how individuals will be educated to act in the lag time. In what Dewey called the "Great Society," which I call a modern society, the pursuit of a calling—including Dewey's call for corporate worship of ideals—is not simply an encounter with progress. It is also an encounter with confusion, friction, selfish incentives, impersonal systems, broad and narrow paths, and sometimes "pathless" and "inexorable" horrors like war (Bourne 1999, p. 200). The case for forces in modern society that work against Dewey's conception of calling as occupation is impressive.

The state of modern society leads Sidney Hook, a thoughtful advocate of Dewey's work, to observe the following:

> …unless concerted political and social efforts are made to strengthen the institutional framework of the democratic community, Dewey's educational philosophy may turn out to be inoperative … In a racist community it cannot be properly applied; nor in a slum city which starves its schools, where municipal administration is corrupt, where hoodlums and delinquents terrorize whole neighborhoods. Indeed, to attempt to apply Dewey's educational philosophy under manifestly unripe and hostile conditions may result in consequences *worse than* those observable in situations where conventional methods of discipline and instruction prevail (emphasis added, 1973 p. 86).

Hook's point is that, prior to enacting Dewey's educational methods, the conditions of modern schools need to be transformed by grown-up, political action. But this point appears to undermine the very idea that education (or school experience) is the crucial means of social transformation. How can the transformation of modern society be credited to schools if what is first required is political action?[64]

In response to this question, Hook offers the following charge: "We must adapt, modify, improvise in a creative way, using some features in one context and some in another, taking advantage of every opportunity to inch forward, like a New York taxi driver—provided we know the direction we are going" (p. 86). Here the "direction" is likely Deweyan. Having discussed the direction of Dewey's socio-religious vision, and acknowledged the ills of modern society, my concern is that Dewey's conception of calling does not sufficiently motivate or guide individuals to work their callings and inch forward towards their ideals in "unripe and hostile" conditions.

Interestingly enough, Dewey critiques Protestants and militant atheists alike for being preoccupied with the isolated individual who plays out a drama of salvation in his lonely soul. Dewey observes: "…the attitude taken is often that of man living in an indifferent and hostile world and issuing blasts of defiance" (1960, p. 53). But what if social transformation demands this? What if inching towards an ideal, like a New York taxi driver, occurs in isolating conditions? What if issuing "blasts of defiance," so to speak, is the only available means of checking those who feverishly rush to get ahead?

Dewey is keen to direct attention away from negative motivations for social transformation. One reason for this is that Dewey refuses to *imaginatively* conceive of what is wrong with society. Recalling this chapter's epigraph, Dewey calls a "religious attitude" one that

[64] Schools of education, too, we might say.

involves a "sense of connection…with the enveloping world that the imagination feels is a universe" (Dewey 1960, p. 53). Unlike other eminent philosophers of education (e.g., Plato or Rousseau), Dewey imagines society made whole but never imagines or dramatizes at length the features of an unhealthy society.[65] Although he encourages readers to imagine "god" as being a synonym of "occupation," where god is defined as an "active relationship between the ideal and actual" (Dewey 1960, p. 51) and occupation is defined as "the growth that comes from the continual interplay of ideas and their embodiment in action" (Dewey 1990, p. 133)—Dewey discourages readers from investing imaginative labors in amplifying, say, the vision of a hellish occupation. Dewey does this on principle, asserting that blanket moral generalizations about social ills obstruct the detailed work of social reform (Dewey 1960, p. 77). But this is a suspicious claim. First, it is selectively applied: imaginatively perusing a general good in society (e.g., treating occupation as if it were god) could also involve neglecting details. Second, it is plausible to suggest that the actual labor of social reform requires motivation to resist what is (generally) wrong with society as well as the motivation to pursue what is (generally) right. Dewey leaves individuals pursuing social transformation in modern society with no momentous aversions—only an expansive playing field for the progressively educated. For this reason it is difficult to imagine how Dewey's religious vision could ever become what he desired it to be: "explicit and militant" (1960, p. 87).

Having cast suspicion on assumptions supporting Dewey's educational vision, I now turn to Weber's historically informed conception of calling, motivated by its behest to explicitly and militantly *see* modern society and resist the forgetfulness of calling that modern society can

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[65] For instance, Dewey writes, "one of the greatest obstacles in conducting this combat [for great social health] is to dispose of social evils in terms of general moral causes. The sinfulness of man, the corruption of his heart, his self-love and love of power" (1960, p. 77).

easily induce. If a person is educated to heed a calling in modern society—any calling, including Dewey's religious conception of it—then active responsibility, a vigilance for the "demands of the day," must bear upon their calling. However, if students take active responsibility for ideas that arise in everyday academic work, and then proceed to take responsibility for the ultimate meaning of their obligations in a manner that resembles what Dewey calls "monstrosities," whose dogged pursuits stunt the "the infinite variety of capacities found in individuals" (Dewey 2004, p. 297), then perhaps we conclude that the relationship between calling and education should be decisively undone. Indeed, perhaps to be educated today means to speak of calling only in a self-consciously, fictive sense. For instance: "Although I experience growth and self-discovery through a countless variety of pursuits and social interactions—I am working at this particular pursuit only *as if* I had a 'calling.'" And—as a corollary—perhaps those who heed actual callings today, like the character Alabanda, must be eyed suspiciously as potential fanatics. Yet, as I will now argue, Weber's work allows us to reconceive the relationship between education and calling. This starts by not glossing over the non-ideal realities in modern society.

4.3 Recalling the Protestant Calling

What is the state of calling in modern society? Weber addresses precisely this question in his historical work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Weber's *Protestant Ethic,* originally published as a series of essays between 1904-1905, has been extensively analyzed (cf. Ghosh 2014). My purpose here is to briefly recapitulate its argument and provide the reader with a sense of Weber's historically informed and imaginative diagnosis of the forgetfulness of calling in modern society.

In *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber argues that the origins of modern capitalism are not

simply technological advancement or an age-old love of material gain, but can be located in a particular *ethos* that obliges its adherents to consider the neglect of work as a forgetfulness of duty (*Pflichtvergessenheit*). Weber (2003) claims that this attitude towards work was born "of a long and arduous education [*Erziehungprozesses*]" (p. 62)—specifically, a religious education. As he notes in the introduction to his study: "The magical and religious forces, and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them, have in the past always been among the most important formative influences on conduct" (2003, p. 27). Weber traces the intellectual origin of these religious forces back to Luther's use of the word "calling" (*Beruf*) in his translation of the Bible. Weber suggests that Luther's translation was politically motivated; Luther wanted to affirm that the cobbler who serves God by repairing shoes performs as devout a service as the monk praying in his cell. Prior to this, as Weber observes in *Economy and Society*, "The church [outbid] secular morality in marriage, state, vocation, and business through the monastic ethic as the higher principle and thus reduce[d] everyday life, especially in the economic sphere, to an ethically inferior level" (Weber 1978, p. 1191). Negatively, Luther's translation of calling disparaged the monk's retreat from everyday life; positively, it aimed to promote fraternity (*Brüderlichkeit*) and elevated the ethical status of everyday work. For our purposes, it suffices to say that Luther's translation made it possible for economic activity to be *engaged* as a devout calling.[66]

The culmination of this religious education, according to Weber, occurred not specifically in John Calvin's logically consistent and non-consoling doctrine of predestination, but as congregants heard this doctrine preached from the pulpit. The fear of being ranked among the damned, coupled with the elimination of magical means of absolution (e.g., sacraments),

[66] There might be room for an interesting comparison of Luther and Dewey here.

placed such a heavy psychological burden on congregants that the duty to succeed in their callings became practically synonymous with obtaining evidence of their salvation. Thus, as congregants felt the uncertainty of their personal salvation, so Weber's thesis runs, a sober and determined *ethos* appeared in everyday life.

Weber makes clear that following a call to work was not easy for the Protestants. A particular obstacle to success in their calling was a traditional work ethic. A traditional work ethic did not cast work as a religious duty—as an end in itself—but as a dispensable means to the enjoyment of life. As Weber describes this pleasant condition, "A long daily visit to the tavern, with often plenty of drink, and a congenial circle of friends, made life comfortable and leisurely" (Weber 2003, p. 67). Thus, to proceed, the Protestant had to resist and overcome the disposition of a traditional work ethic. A "comfortable and leisurely" life had to be cast as a distraction to calling, which was a duty to serve God in the world. In Weber's eyes, efforts to overcome such great obstacles endowed the Protestants' everyday actions with heroism.[67]

Weber's argument is that the Protestant ethic—born of a religious education—bears an "elective affinity" to the spirit of capitalism, where the *summum bonum* is "the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life" (2003, p. 53). The spirit of capitalism resembles the Protestant's calling precisely because it sets work (or occupation*)* as an end in itself. Yet, unlike the Protestant ethic, the spirit of capitalism bears no religious or metaphysical significance. According to Weber, Benjamin Franklin's maxims "Remember that *time* is money … Remember that *credit* is money" (quoted in Weber 2003, p. 48-49) exemplify the ethic of capitalism, but not the Protestant ethic—that is, Franklin's maxims cast the earning of more money as a prudential duty, but not as a religious duty.

[67] Weber is well aware that "insane" could also be a predicate.

Moreover, the spirit of capitalism does not animate a natural order created by God, but, as Weber imaginatively described it, a "cosmos" of capitalism marked by anti-religious ambitions.

The cosmos of capitalism is not an environment oriented by higher purposes. Rather, as Weber incisively writes, it irreligiously "educates [*erzieht*] and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest" (p. 55). Work no longer occurs according to God-willed activity, and perhaps not even according to Franklin's maxims, but in a second-nature arena of competition where participation is compulsory. As Weber writes in one of his book's most famous lines,

> In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage (2003, p. 181).

It is worth pausing here to note that the frequently used term "iron cage" is the product of a poor translation. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons freely translated *stahlhartes Gehäuse* as "iron cage." Parsons (consciously or subconsciously) took Weber to be alluding to a scene in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), where the main character, Christian, is shown a forsaken professor trapped in an iron cage. Yet, as many have noted, *stahlhartes Gehäuse* is better translated as a "shell/casing as hard as steel." Peter Baehr persuasively contends that Weber's *stahlhartes Gehäuse* is a condition less final or despairing than Bunyan's iron cage. Steel is a man-made and specifically modern substance, and the shell/casing (put into a metaphorical relationship with "cloak") is something one wears or dwells in. The shell/casing is thus both a "shelter and constraint" (Baehr 2001, p. 164). Accordingly, Weber's metaphor is not a wail of despair but more nearly a critique of modern people who are weighed down by the steel shell of capitalism and "have their nose so close to the ground that they are incapable of aspiring

to heaven or any non-utilitarian value" (Baehr 2001, p. 160). This shell/casing as hard as steel is better, perhaps, than an iron cage—but it is not benign. As Weber writes,

> The Puritan *wanted* to work in a calling; we are *forced* to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order (emphasis added, Weber 2003, p. 181).

Weber describes capitalism as an unstoppable social force.

It is worth pausing here to note that if, as this dissertation claims, there is continuity between a student heeding the demands of particular intellectual ideas with active responsibility and a person heeding the demands of a calling with active responsibility, then the cosmos of capitalism must impinge upon the student's education too. Consider: The students who slack have it coming, while the most successful students sacrifice their youth and work *as if* they were heroically, religiously, or aesthetically called to have excellent test scores and be admitted into prestigious schools. Yet their compulsion is likely not driven by a conception of the meaning of their identity or a moral cause, but, more nearly, by the market's demand to beat out the competition for scarce educational and economic resources. Weber would find this appalling. For this reason it is not hard to see why Weber's contemporaries read him as an opponent of the Protestant's calling.

4.4 The Historical Context of Weber's Affirmation of Vocation

In an essay entitled "Vocation and Youth" (published in *Die Wissen Blätter* on May 15, 1917), a young author writing under the pseudonym Franz Xaver Schwab denounced vocation as a bourgeois idol that must be smashed in order to revive a full and flourishing conception of humanity: one reminiscent of the Greek ideal taught in the German *Gymnasium*, and the

objective of Hyperion's "beautiful war." In advancing this critique, Schwab claimed that "the only persons in our time who have something important to say about vocation in a conscious way are the brothers Max and Alfred Weber in Heidelberg" (quoted in Schluchter 1996, p. 32-33). Schwab was referencing Max Weber as an ally in his charge to smash the oppressive legacy of vocation. An initial reading of *The Protestant Ethic* stirs a desire to escape from the strictures of a Puritanical legacy. Furthermore, despite his intentions to put evaluations to the side and keep his study purely descriptive, Weber himself confesses in *The Protestant Ethic* that "the path of human destiny cannot but *appall* him who surveys a section of it" (emphasis added, Weber 2003, p. 29). In Deweyan terms, what is so appalling about the Protestant's calling is its supernatural sanction of activity that belittles leisure and casts the pursuit of flourishing as an obstacle to obsessive work. Indeed, Schwab may have been sympathetic to Dewey's "vocation of life," and his attempt to revamp the Greek ideal by collapsing the dualism between labor and leisure in modern society.[68]

But Weber did not end up backing Schwab's position. In an indirect response to Schwab's article (Schuluchter 1996, p. 33), Weber would associate vocation with his own engagement in science, politics, and education. The conception of vocation that Weber advanced was in many ways akin to the Protestant vocation. But why would Weber affirm an "appalling" notion like the Protestant's calling?

4.5 The Difficulty of Calling in Modern Society

This question betrays a hurried reading. Although Weber claimed he was not "musically" attuned to religion,[69] he was not appalled by the Protestant ethic as such. What appalled Weber

[68] Cf. The extended argument made in Dewey's later work *Art as Experience*.

was the cosmos of capitalism, which reduces social life to a second-nature arena of competition where adaptation is compulsory and blindly habitual. Within the cosmos of capitalism, *working* insights about values (or, the "magical and religious forces, and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them") no longer elevate the status of everyday life and a calling cannot be discerned in a person's activity. What appalled Weber, as one scholar aptly puts it, is that "vocational duty was replaced by mere striving for success" (Schluchter 1996, p. 69). More specifically, self-determination becomes weighed down and reduced to an instrumental rationality intent on competing for morally irrelevant goods (e.g., money or status). This evokes a Weberian distinction that will become important later in my argument: value rationality (*wertrational*) demands that individuals account for their values and consider whether their actions consistently accord with them; instrumental rationality (*zweckrational)* demands that individuals move efficiently from point A to point B (cf. Starr 1999, p. 419). Thus, individuals who have successfully adjusted to the cosmos of capitalism act in a manner that evinces the "calling" to achieve minimal friction and maximum satisfaction (*zweckrational*) in their occupation in order to secure morally irrelevant goods.

Yet, as Weber sees it, individuals who constantly adapt to the cosmos of capitalism to secure goods become rationalized and unmusical versions of Diderot's character Rameau's nephew, who postured himself without shame to profit in an unjust society. Although their behavior appears purposeful, as it conforms to formal procedures and rational systems, there is nothing internal, no ultimate obligation—nothing outside of the vagaries of the external environment—to reorient or check their adaptation. For this reason, people who consistently navigate life strategically in search of morally irrelevant goods, as Weber judges following Kant,

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[69] As Weber was raised by a devout Protestant mother and maintained a close friendship with the theologian Ernst Troeltsch, it is important to consider that he was not exactly tone-deaf either.

lack personality—where that term is defined as: "consistency of … intimate relationship to certain 'ultimate values' and 'meanings' of life" (translated by Portis 1978, p.114). Individuals without personality lack dignity. Their lives do not affirm an internal commitment to values; they lack integrity because their relationship to values is dictated by external circumstances, and they lack autonomy because they are not shaped by values they have chosen and thought independently about, but only according to the game-like means—the chutes and ladders, so to speak—of their environment (cf. Brubaker 1984, p. 96). Ultimately what appalls Weber is the demise of individuals, like the Protestants, who were motivated by the demands of their calling and elevated the ethical status of everyday life by acting dutifully therein.

Does this mean Weber wishes for a healthy society *permeated* by a sense of vocation? Possibly, but readers will find little resembling a reconciled social vision in Weber's work[70]—which does not offer hopeful visions (at least not explicitly), but instead a variety of descriptions, images, and explanations for why modern society is not hospitable to callings. Weber invests his imaginative labor in diagnosing what is wrong with modern society. His work provides negative motivation to pursue a calling: for instance, the motivation to throw off the "shell as hard as steel" in fear of losing one's moral cause and neglecting one's *daemon*. The Weberian educator who keeps in mind the student's calling and how he responds to the demands of particular ideas in class (e.g., algebra problems) also acknowledges that the student's attention to these demands and calling can be dampened by the much louder demand of the cosmos of capitalism: literally, the demand for self-preservation. Thus the Weberian educator in anticipating her students

[70] An exception to this, perhaps, is Weber's work on the concept of brotherliness (cf. Symonds and Pudsey 2006). However Weber is generally a pessimistic theorist. I think what Jeffrey Green says about Machiavelli also applies to Weber: "political morality … is a morality for minimizing a preexisting set of evils; it has little to do with attaining some positive good" (Green 2010, p. 24).

callings must also must anticipate struggle to resist modern society.

Commentators have noted that Weber's struggle against modern society was expressed in terms of responsibility. As Löwith describes: "The motive force of Weber's whole approach … was the contradiction, always conquered anew, between the recognition of a rationalized world and the counter-tendency towards freedom for self-responsibility" (1993, p. 77). Or, as Brubaker puts it: "[Weber] affirms the ethical significance of rational action 'within institutions of the world but in opposition to them'" through an "ethos of engaged opposition" and "responsible struggle" (1984, p. 111). Both of these passages suggest that Weber conceived of taking active responsibility for one's life as an affair involving conflict. But the possibility of conflict and the need to anticipate resistance does not undermine Weber's conception of calling, but rather makes it more pronounced. Because Weber is not beholden to a vision of a "Great Community" permeated by harmonious senses of vocation, his work compels educators to think concretely about why students should heed the demands of ideas in a success-oriented cosmos of capitalism, where the competitive pursuit of education as positional goods is so pervasive that the "demands of the day" seem given in advance. Students who heed the demands of ideas do not profit materially in such an environment.

Philosopher Robert Paul Wolff provides an excellent example of this in *The Ideal of the University* (1969). Wolff asks readers to imagine a college student named John who has a great passion for historical ideas – so great a passion that he does not attend his other classes. John is thus kicked out of school for heeding the demands of historical ideas. As Wolff remarks: "Everything in the organization of [the university]…conspires to persuade John that he is a failure…" (p. 65). Yet John was engaged in more genuine and formative education than his peers, who simply distributed their energy "prudently, if dispassionately, among [their] several

courses" (ibid.). If John does not give in to the supposition that he has failed at life because he failed at strategically navigating the university, he may lack a credential but be well on his way to heeding his calling over and against this experienced antagonism.

4.6 Fragmented Callings

Dewey might appreciate Weber's critique of capitalism, but he would protest the idea that heeding a calling, even in spite of the misfortunes of modern society, is rightly conceived as being fraught with conflict and fragmentation. How did Weber envision and justify fragmented callings?

Weber provides his prescriptive vision of calling in two lectures: "Science as a Vocation" (1917) and "Politics as a Vocation" (1919). At a formal level, these lectures embrace the historical conception of vocation described in *The Protestant Ethic*. For instance, in order to follow their calling, the Protestants had to heroically resist a traditional economic ethic, ascetically renounce worldly comforts, and religiously attend to their everyday work. Weber's discussion of the (modern) academic vocation and (modern) political vocation can be expressed according to a similar vocational template. In "Science as a Vocation," Weber claims that the academic must learn to heroically resist the encroachment of capitalistic mentality upon the university; the academic must learn to ascetically renounce fulfilling his youthful audiences' strong desires for leadership and quasi-religious "experience"; and the academic must learn to serve ideas with special devotion. In "Politics as a Vocation," Weber claims that the politician must learn to heroically resist domination by the aims of bureaucratic efficiency or power-hungry party bosses; the politician must learn to ascetically renounce common vanity; and the politician must learn to be so devoted to a particular cause that he issues blasts of defiance in the

face of great opposition: "Here I stand. I can do no other" (Weber 2008, p. 205). [71]

Though they share a vocational template, Weber does not aspire to fit these callings together or concoct a grand calling. Weber's aim is not social reconciliation or breaking down the "barriers of distance" that obstruct social harmony. On the other hand, Weber's purposes are not to instigate a vocational war, reveal battlefields, or stir up "value collision." Rather, in "Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation," Weber is speaking as an educator. He presents material about vocations and encourages students to think independently about the meaning of their obligations and actions in the world. His aim is not to prompt students to affirm the callings he describes because of a "momentary impression," but for students to take an active responsibility for the meaning of their lives. Weber recognizes that living out a calling in modern society is not given (as it may have been in the past). A condition of confusion persists; when it is examined distinct callings are found at odds.[72]

To be sure, a prejudice for conflict is uncomfortable for those who sympathize with Dewey's social vision of occupation premised upon the "common good." As an educator, however, Weber's intention was not to realize a comprehensive religious vision or univocal social transformation; rather, it was to help students to understand their demands of the day. What many today would consider a positive aspect of a Weberian education is its insistence on

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[71] As the editors of this translation note, this line is attributed to Luther at the Diet of Worms (April 18, 1521).

[72] For instance, as Weber echoes Machiavelli, the person with a calling for politics must look down upon the religious obligation to care more about the salvation of their soul than the city; the person with a calling for academic inquiry must have contempt for the modern politician's need to exploit his audience using "crowd phenomena"; and the religious "virtuosos," like Saint Francis, must want nothing to do with the puffed-up vanity of intellectuals or the politician's dirty hands. For Weber, the ethical distinctions between different callings—i.e., the pluralism of their distinct demands—are clarified as they conflict to such an extent that, as Bruun notes, "one is almost led to conclude that [Weber] has a positive prejudice in favor of this kind of 'tense coexistence'" (Bruun, 2007, p. 38).

pluralism: that students can entertain and modify a diversity of fundamental commitments. The Weberian educator introduces and clarifies callings intellectually, but does not aim to preach an exclusive direction for addressing "problems of world shaking importance—the most exalted problems that can move the human heart" (Weber 1975, p. 418). Without supplying causes, but still hoping that students will have independent insights about them, the Weberian educator cares that students can respond to the following questions with concrete details: (1) To pursue this cause, or this moral task, what are the obstacles in the world I must work to overcome? (2) To pursue this cause, what are the limitations I must impose upon my life? (3) And to pursue this cause, what would it imply about the ultimate meaning of my obligations?

4.7 Active Responsibility for a Calling

When a student's active responsibility for heeding the demands of the ultimate meaning of his obligations is stressed as an aim of education, education and calling become intimately related. Daily obligations—experienced and worked as the demands of ideas—contribute to the student's larger obligations. As it should be quite clear by now, the educator's role in the student's calling is not to match a student's preferences and capacities with lucrative careers, nor to adjust them to the "common good" *simpliciter*. Instead, it means that an educator hopes that provoking an active responsibility for the ideas that arise in class will have a formative effect on students and help them to take an active responsibility for ideas about the meaning of their obligations. This means both recognizing the importance of these ideas and striving to work their demands with "clarity" and a "sense of responsibility" (Weber 2008, p. 48). The authentic response to a calling, however, does not occur during or after an academic lecture, and likely does not occur in the teacher's presence; instead, the authentic response occurs through the student's conduct of life (*Lebensführung*), as a calling is responsibly heeded and reflected upon

in action as a governing "demand of the day."

Having examined Dewey's conception of calling as occupation and Weber's conception of calling as an ultimate obligation, I have thus far suggested that Dewey's conception of calling insufficiently acknowledges modern society, while Weber's conception of calling proceeds from an unblinking acknowledgement of the difficulty of heeding a calling in modern society. Here Weber's pessimism is non-consoling, particularly towards those who have trouble thinking about educational aims apart from political aims regarding the common good. It suggests, put frankly, that having a calling in modern society is to move against the current and to appear "monstrous." But why should the appearances given to calling by modern society determine its value, particularly when it is realized that modern society, marked the cosmos of capitalism, does little to sustain the intrinsic value of education? Assuredly, "for prudential reasons," is an readily available answer. But educators who prioritize educational practice, as I have suggested, are aware of a tension between working for what the system demands and working for particular students. They understand their anticipations for their particular students run counter to the system's demands. And thus, I think educator's would greatly appreciate Weber's conception, because it honestly acknowledges the realities modern society while stressing the ideal quality of the fundamental obligation to prioritize educational practice, an educated calling. Nevertheless, prior to concluding, it is important to test the educational value of a Weberian calling with two objections that will serve to hedge these claims.

4.8 Concern 1: Gap Between Theory and Practice

There exists a connection between Weber and Dewey that lies in the importance of

learning about one's calling through action and reflection.[73] The continuity between learning about occupations and acting upon them is readily apparent in Dewey's work, yet its obscurity is a problem in Weber's account.

Dewey affirms, "The only adequate training *for* occupations is training *through* occupations*"* (2004, p. 298). Dewey then proceeds to describe school as an embryonic society wherein students can test, discover, and appreciate a variety of occupations. Sounds progressive. But to recall my critique, outside of Dewey's "healthy society," calling and occupation are not one and the same. The former involves a commitment to deeply held values, and the latter need not. Furthermore, there is a fact that Dewey's religiously inflected conception of calling does not help us to imagine: the cosmos of capitalism is a second-nature environment hostile to all callings. It "educates [*erzieht*] and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest" (Weber 2003, p. 55). Thus any person—especially a person ardently pursuing Dewey's religious vision—must resist the success ethic that modern society forcefully inculcates if they are to heed a calling. As demonstrated above, Weber's work can be used to critique Dewey's conception of calling for underestimating the social force of capitalism and overestimating the social progress that occurs through schooling. But does Weber offer a plausible educational alternative in modern society?

It is difficult to see how, because a Weberian education does not proceed through the actual conduct of life, but through disinterested and value-free lessons. These lessons prepare students to take an active responsibility for their callings by positing continuity between these callings and taking an active responsibility for insights that arise through concrete intellectual problem-solving. In short, thinking independently about intellectual problems—somehow—

[73] For instance, Dewey writes in *A Common Faith:* " Interaction between ends and existent conditions improves and tests the ideal; and conditions are at the same time modified" (p. 50).

facilitates independent action in the face of practical problems. This should raise suspicions. For why do we assume that intellectual problems arise with the same force and urgency as practical problems? This suspicion will be clear to anyone who recognizes the great practical problems associated with resisting the irrational demands of modern society. For this reason, it might be claimed that a Weberian education neglects treating, and thereby discounts, the demands of practical problems in the world. And then it might be said that a Weberian education insufficiently provokes students to take an active responsibility for practical action.

Max Horkheimer, the pioneer of critical theory, lamented after attending one of Weber's lectures, "It was all so precise, so scientifically exact, so value-free that we all went sadly home" (quoted Derman 2010, p. 484). I cannot speak to the quality of that particular lecture, but Weber lends support to Horkheimer's reaction by claiming to have lectured "abstractly, purely conceptually—intentionally" (quoted in Weber, 1975, p. 664). How provoking an active responsibility for insights about abstract and conceptual material actually prepares students for their conduct of life remains unclear. A gap remains, which seems to undermine the continuity between working the demands of ideas in an academic setting and engaging a calling in modern society.

4.8.1 Response

But it would be far from accurate to say that Weber was numb to urgent practical problems, and it is doubtful that Weber's lectures merely transmitted abstract content that could be replaced, for instance, by a programmed machine. There was a peculiar passion to Weber's lectures. As Heinrich Rickert observed of Weber, "such dualism [between the practical and theoretical] was both a moral and theoretical necessity for him, and he carried it out in practice to such an astonishingly high degree … [the audience felt] as though they were listening to a man

forcibly suppressing something within himself" (quoted in Bruun, p. 38). I take these lines, particularly in light of the Weberian educator's peculiar charisma mentioned in the introduction, as evidence of educational passion. Generalized, it might be said that the Weberian educator's passion for her students' independent thinking does not intend to entrench the gap between theory and practice, but intends for her students to *discover* the distinction between theoretical understanding (science) and practical action (politics), to internalize this distinction, and to use it as a guide in their conduct of life. The lesson here is not whether the demands of an insight pertain to theory or practice, but how to judge whether what Weber called "sharply pointed and quite concrete problems" require reflective distance or practical urgency (quoted in Jaspers 1989, 108-109).[74] So, as I understand it, Weber's peculiar passion for his students' "independent thinking" about intellectual and practical problems required him to *live* this distinction as an educator and convey both reflective distance (directly) and practical urgency (indirectly). To recall Raymond Aaron's (1957) explanation of Weber's uniqueness:

> Weber's originality and greatness consist first of all in the fact that he was, and aimed at being, a politician and a thinker at the same time, or more precisely that he both separated and united politics and science. He separated them, in the sense that science has to be independent of our preferences, and purged of all value judgments. But he also united them, for science is conceived in such a way as to make it indispensible for action. (67)

I claim that the Weberian educator, who neither bends toward a rationalistic nihilism that *only* knows reflective distance nor towards a fanaticism that knows *no* reflective distance, merges what Aaron calls "science" and "politics." The Weberian educator inculcates a distinction

[74] The full passage reads: "After very long experience and principled conviction, I have the viewpoint that only by putting to the test one's supposed "ultimate" positional attitude on the approach to sharply pointed, quite concrete problems, does his own real intention become clear to the individual (quoted in Jaspers 1989, p. 108-109).

between distance and urgency because she never loses sight of the possibility that her provocation of active responsibility will echo as the student heeds and acts upon his calling. The Weberian educator does not envision a fictitious (*as if*) calling, because she does not aspire to echo the demands of her students' merely fictive (*as if*) ideas. Neither does the Weberian educator envision an absence of calling, a fanatical calling, a calling that is merely a Romantic portrait of the self's personality, or a calling that arises from the amplification of personal preference. For this is not what echoing the demands of her students' ideas means in the present, and would not be how her students learn to heed a calling in the future.

Granting that an educated calling is not half-serious, nihilistic, fanatical, or simply preference-based, Dewey could still claim that it remains monstrous. For the educated calling envisioned by the Weberian educator ignores the "infinite variety of capacities" that might arise as a person interacts with others in a harmonious and shared social space.

4.9 Concern 2: The Impoverishment of Social Experience

There is another objection to Weber's conception of an educated calling that any familiarity with Dewey's ideas will rightly invoke, namely that it impoverishes social experience. To see this, imagine several young adults who have received a Weberian education. Having learned about the "the demands of *their* day," we can imagine each one feels the pull of a distinct cause in the world, and given the Weberian educator's assumption that distinct causes do not find unity, we can further imagine that all students might find themselves in a tense coexistence *within* the classroom. A variety of conflicting causes might draw students into conflict: some students might seek theoretical distance in order to avoid the practical urgency surrounding the conflict; others might decide to become who they are by engaging it, no-holds-barred. How would the Weberian educator intervene? Dewey's point here would be that the

Weberian educator's fixation upon a student's isolated soul and its cause in the world created a problem by overlooking abundant opportunities for communication and growth in the classroom.

There are good reasons for classmates to appreciate the values they share in common: an environment marked by hostility and isolation hinders clear and responsible thinking, whereas an environment where common values flourish—and dialogue occurs—supports deliberation, including deliberation about personal responsibilities. If educators have control over educational conditions, therefore, it seems far wiser to create a common educational experience free from unnecessary conflicts and blockages and barriers to communication. Weber—along with many academics today—overlooks this simple piece of classroom wisdom.

But the objection continues beyond the classroom because it is not just an objection to a Weberian education, but to Weber's vision of the social world. Why must we assume that the condition of confusion (or value collision) as an existential fact? Contrary to a vision of the social world that fixates upon its non-ideal and pluralistic character, Dewey bids us to see that common values encouraged in the classroom can become values shared in the world. Although the world, like the classroom, is never a matter of certainty, human experience in either setting can be improved and controlled by patient intelligence and careful experimentation. As Dewey observed, "Whether or no we are, save in some metaphorical sense, all brothers, we are at least all in the same boat traversing the same turbulent ocean. The potential religious significance of this *fact* is infinite" (emphasis added, 1960, p. 84). Harboring an assumption that undermines this "fact," the Weberian educator bids us to envision "monstrous" individuals who heed their calling by resisting the social world. As such, the Weberian educator not only overlooks the discovery and crystallization of good arising from common experience (within schools or societies). If we are—in fact—on the "same boat," and we do—in fact—desire to improve the voyage with the

best methods available (*ad infinitum*), then encouraging students to heed a calling against common experience seems always to be an irresponsible way forward.

4.9.1 Response

A response to this objection utilizes terms already defined. In short, Dewey's philosophy bids us to collapse instrumental rationality and value rationality, while affirming a condition of social harmony. Dewey renounces "final states," but he does not renounce an ultimate direction: discovering intelligent methods and securing common values. Following this direction, problems arise and solutions are discovered and secured as facts that align with the order of things. So, just as we can and should discover cures for specific physical ailments, we can and should discover cures for specific social ailments. There are better and worse cures, of course, but the direction of discovering cures is not better or worse. It is, simply, the intelligent way forward.

To read Dewey charitably, we should dismiss the frightening image of public officials violating the liberty of consciousness by "vaccinating" society against recalcitrant beliefs that vex social harmony. This critique would be unfair to Dewey, who actively defended social deviants. Yet, after several charitable readings, it is still difficult to silence the concern that Dewey's emphasis on discovering the common good obscures questions about decision-makers and their responsibilities. As Sheldon Wolin observes,

> In the end Dewey's most crucial concepts—experimentation, method, and culture—were ways of evading questions about power. His society appears fixated on the finding of methods, the conduct of experiments, and the communication of results. Questions of how problems are identified, who controls the communication of results, and who evaluates the consequences were

all left indeterminate (2006, p. 517).[75]

Wolin's concern over power can be captured as a concern over who shoulders the responsibility for decisions that affect the community. That we are on the same boat, so to speak, does not mean we all have equal abilities to evaluate and enforce its direction, or that we will evaluate it in the same way, or that there is a single method for evaluating a particular problem. By directing attention towards discovery and away from decision, by setting discovery as a given, a Deweyan occupation risks avoiding the burden of responsibility, and missing the necessity of an education that prepares students to shoulder this burden in modern society. If a person wants to live into a vision of us being on the "same boat," in modern society, this person must monstrously affirm it as a "Deweyan demand of the day" and take responsibility for the inconvenient truths their author neglected.

I do not intend this response as a dismissal of Dewey, but neither do I think Dewey's objection provides sufficient cause for rejecting a Weberian education in modern society. Education should prepare students to recognize the tension between a world we discover (science) and a world we decide upon (politics). However, as Weber goes further in appreciating this tension—bringing it to life, as I suggested above, through the educator—I am led to privilege a Weberian account of an educated calling as a ultimate obligation over a Deweyan account of an occupation serving the common good. A person who heeds his calling with active responsibility, amidst a society where false needs, distractions, and the pursuit of profit reign supreme ought to be classed as truly educated—not monstrous. The "demands of the day" only seem monstrous because heeding them requires resolutely moving against the current of modern society, where education only means a competition for successful adjustment, where aimlessness

[75] Wolin's remarks on Dewey have been recently critiqued by Roudy Hildreth (2009) and Melvin Rogers (2009).

is systematized, where callings are muted.

4.10 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to defend calling as an educational aim in modern society. I have privileged the Weberian conception of calling over a Deweyan conception of calling, but I think that struggling with Weber's and Dewey's conceptions of calling can clarify and reaffirm the relationship between calling and education. But clarify and reaffirm to what end?

As I see it, calling can be used to reformulate the one basic question of philosophy of education in a manner that affirms the priority of educational practice. Again, this question runs: "To what extent can educating children for the common good be reconciled with educating them for their own good?" (Curren 2013, p. 233). As mentioned in the introduction, I do not think this question carries much weight in modern society, because what is common is capitalism and what is good is plural. Political visions of the common good become highly speculative and far removed from reality when they are imposed on educators and students. Stressing the highly speculative demand of a unified with society, as I see it, is a recipe for ignoring the educator's concern for preparing particular students to think independently about their calling in modern society. So, how might this basic question be reformulated? Political philosopher David Walsh provides an intriguing hint in the conclusion of his study *The Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence* (2008). Walsh writes, "Any serious account would, of course, have begun with the recognition that it is precisely fidelity to such principles that stands in more need of explanation than the principles themselves" (p. 463). Thinking through the question of an educator's fidelity to their students' callings strikes me as a promising direction for philosophers of education.

Recasting the one basic question of philosophy of education in terms of calling emphasizes the need for the educator's fidelity to the students' conceptions of themselves and of the world as these conceptions are enacted in modern society. The new basic question might read: How do you faithfully prepare persons for a conduct of life that could clearly and responsibly be affirmed by them as the response to a calling? This question gains significance in the context of Weber's work, wherein it becomes necessary to confront the question of how educational practice can provoke students to take an active responsibility for academic content in a manner that will equip them to take an active responsibility for their calling in modern society.

Expressed in terms of the particular concerns of this dissertation, the question might read: How do you educate people, amidst contemporary educational institutions, to take an active responsibility for the ultimate meaning of their obligations in a non-ideal and pluralistic world? I think taking this question seriously bears promise. It can help philosophers of education consider how diverse educational practices and curriculums might hang together in a general way; how a variety of ideas (e.g., about algebra, English, art, or history) can inform a person's fundamental insight about the ultimate meaning of his obligations in the world. It is thin enough to accommodate and respectfully inform a plurality of beliefs. It encourages encountering particular and concrete problems and highlights how ideas arising from them bear the potential to shape a student's fidelity to the meaning of their obligations in the world. Finally, raising this question can provoke philosophers of education themselves to examine the purposes driving their work: whether these purposes envision "easy streets" or merely issue "blasts of defiance"—and, ultimately, whether the field itself possesses anything resembling a calling that would provide reason and motivation to continue to think philosophically about educational practice irrespective of the market's demands.

Chapter 5

Thinking Through Disenchantment:
A Propaedeutic to Responsible Re-enchantment

"Does that mean," I said in some bewilderment, "that we must eat again of the tree of knowledge in order to return to the state of innocence?"

—Heinrich von Kleist

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the Weberian educator aims to prepare students for an educated calling. I raised a Deweyan critique of Weber: namely, that the Weberian educator is content with her students' isolation, or as Dewey might describe it, with her students "living in an indifferent and hostile world and issuing blasts of defiance" (1960, p. 53). It is not difficult to imagine the Weberian educator, like her students, alone and evincing an "ethos of engaged opposition" and "responsible struggle" against the system (Brubaker 1984, p. 111). Teaching in contemporary educational institutions can be a lonely and frusterating experience. But if prioritizing educational practice is to become *motivational* within contemporary educational institutions, the image of the teacher's isolated struggle—"a small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism" (Weber 1978, p. 988)—seems sorely insufficient for the task.

I do not think teachers demoralized by contemporary educational reforms need to be reminded of their isolation and lack of professional autonomy. Instead, as I see it, they need encouragement and reminders about what grounds the dignity of their cause. Having so far expressed the educator's cause only through the relationship between a student and teacher, in this chapter I consider the social aspect of the Weberian educator's cause. I will argue that the educator who echoes the demands of particular insights that arise in the classroom and bestows the gift of independent thinking enacts a cause, which I will call responsible re-enchantment. This cause can be depicted as persons pursuing educated callings and enhancing the ethical status

of everyday life as they heed *their* "demands of the day" and thereby resist the cosmos of capitalism.

Prior to depicting the Weberian educator's cause, however, it is important to understand how the possibility of re-enchantment can responsibly arise amidst disenchanting social conditions. Thus, rather than simply making a re-enchantment proposal, I will use Weber's work as a guide for thinking *through* (by which I mean "beyond") disenchanting social conditions, for which educational institutions provide fitting examples.

In his recent book *The Allure of Order* (2013), sociologist Jal Mehta suggests that the major U.S. educational reform movements of the 20th century can be characterized using Weber's term "rationalization." "As Weber famously noted," says Mehta, "rationalization creates order out of chaos, but it does so at the cost of creating an 'iron cage' that often emphasizes the measurable to the exclusion of the meaningful" (2013, p. 6). In the previous chapter, I argued that an education in active responsibility involves resisting the success ethic that dominates the cosmos of capitalism and renders talk of an education for "callings" naïve and superfluous. Yet Mehta's observation about the history of educational reform points to a larger story. Indeed, capitalism is only one manifestation of a larger historical process of rationalization, where, as Weber famously described, the world becomes disenchanted. Assuming that Mehta is right and Weberian rationalization is a problematic tendency in educational reform, which philosophers of education have recently captured using related conceptions of "what works" (Beista 2007), "instrumentalization" (Higgins 2011), and externally motivated "standards, accountability, and outcome assessment schemes"(Curren 2013, p. 244), then perhaps resisting rationalization means advocating for the re-enchantment of education. But my primary claim in this chapter is that thinking about re-enchantment will not be useful to

contemporary educators if an effort is not first made to understand and think through disenchantment as a social condition.

To make this argument, I will begin by briefly mentioning three contemporary re-enchantment proposals (John McDowell's, Charles Taylor's, and Akeel Bilgrami's) and describe how their proposals—not written for educators—might be applied to current educational conditions. While these proposals are exciting and suggest creative possibilities, what they all share in common and what educators will likely find most familiar is their critique of disenchantment, which springs from Weber. I next turn to Weber to develop at greater length a distinction between Weber's description of a disenchanted social condition and a Weberian method for teaching in this disenchanted social condition. Claiming that education provides a means for *thinking through* a disenchanted social condition, I will conclude by arriving at the Weberian educator's cause, what I call responsible re-enchantment.

5.2 Contemporary Re-enchantment Proposals

It is helpful to begin describing these contemporary re-enchantment proposals by pointing out that none of the philosophers mentioned above are proposing a naïve return to a pre-scientific age (McDowell 1996, p. 72). Yet all of the philosophers mentioned note philosophical problems with the modern idea that nature is "brute and valueless" (Bilgrami 2014, p. 185), and that "the universe in which we find ourselves is totally devoid of human meaning" (Taylor 2011, p. 116). Another connection is that all of these philosophers subscribe to a version of moral realism, where meanings and values exist whether or not they are recognized by particular peoples at particular times. As McDowell writes, "The idea is that the dictates of reason are there anyway, whether or not one's eyes are opened to them" (1996, p. 91). These contemporary re-

enchantment proposals stand as responses to the philosophical problems with disenchanted conceptions of nature, subjects, and politics.

5.2.1 Re-enchanting Nature

For McDowell, the philosophical problem of disenchantment arises when the whole of nature is conceived scientistically – that is, in terms of natural laws alone. When this occurs, meaning is problematically reduced to facts about nature, and our receptivity to the demands of reason, such as ethical demands, begin to provoke anxieties because they appear otherworldly or "spooky" (1996, p. 82). These anxieties can be dismissed, according to McDowell, by recalling Aristotle's conception of second nature, which involves "initiation into conceptual capacities which include responsiveness to other rational demands besides those of ethics … having one's eyes opened to reasons at large by acquiring a second nature" (1996, p. 84). For McDowell, a person's initiation into language and culture as his formation (or *Bildung*) occurs, explains the fact that shared conceptual content exists in the world—and, by implication, that the world is not utterly disenchanted. A person's receptivity to the demands of reason in the world, born through acquisition of a second nature, refutes a (disenchanted) scientistic naturalism.

5.2.2 Re-enchanting Subjects

Charles Taylor's re-enchantment proposal is inspired by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's critique of modern epistemology. This critique affirms that "Our grasp of the world is not simply a representation in us [but] resides rather in our dealing with reality" (Taylor 2011, p. 117). Taylor's re-enchantment proposal responds to the problem of atomistic modern subjects, who relate to the world *as if* upon reflection. As Taylor sees it, the modern subject can be described as "buffered"—i.e. disengaged from meanings and values in the natural and social world (Taylor

2007, p. 42). Although not quite harkening back to a pre-modern "porous" self—which is haplessly susceptible to a world of spirits—Taylor's re-enchantment proposal calls for the

> need to enlarge our palette of … points of contact with fullness [robust meanings in the world], because we are too prone in our age to think of this contact in terms of "experience"; and to think of experience as something subjective, distinct from the object experienced; and as something to do with our feelings, distinct from changes in our being: dispositions, orientations, the bent of our lives, etc. (2007, p. 730)

In contrast to McDowell, who diagnoses philosophical anxieties provoked by a disenchanted view of nature, Taylor's work diagnoses the problem as stemming from the buffered subjects produced by a disenchanted (or secular) age. His re-enchantment proposal thus amounts to a historical diagnosis that makes a case for the possibility of a fuller experience in the world.

5.2.3 Re-enchanting Politics

A third re-enchantment proposal, Akeel Bilgrami's work aims to draw out the "humane and radical political possibilities" (2014, p. 201) in Romantic metaphysics as articulated by M.H. Abrahams in *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971). Bilgrami's concern with disenchantment—which he traces back to William Blake—involves a political critique of the collective understanding that shapes and implements policies by evacuating values. Bilgrami finds the most important and creative resources for critiquing what we might call "disenchanted policy" lie in everyday perceptions of the world, which are "shot through with value properties, that is to say, enchanted in the low-profile sense" (2014, p. 205). An example of Bilgrami's proposal, which he does not mention directly but would very likely affirm, can be found in Wordsworth's poem "The Old Cumberland Beggar." In the poem, Wordsworth describes the various everyday values disclosed by the beggar's presence and contrasts them with the politician's singular desire to "sweep" the

beggar from the street and rid the world of "nuisances." But, in this case, these nuisances include the everyday values disclosed by the beggar's presence. The politician and his policies thus perpetuate disenchantment. The political project motivated by Bilgrami's re-enchantment proposal is one that removes the boundary separating the frame of policy from the frame of low-profile, quotidian enchantment such that everyday values and responses to the world (like those disclosed by the beggar's presence) are brought to bear on value-neutral policies that would perpetuate the disenchantment of politics.

5.2.4 Applying Re-enchantment Proposals

Recalling Mehta's line that the history of U.S. educational reform is marked by Weberian rationalization, which "emphasizes the measurable to the exclusion of the meaningful" (2013, p. 6), there arises a healthy inclination to apply these re-enchantment proposals to contemporary educational institutions and put them to immediate work. For instance, if our upbringing enables us to become receptive to the demands of reason, as McDowell notes, and, as one commentator concludes, "education makes us who we are" (Bakhurst 2011, p. 162), then perhaps educators could use McDowell's work to identify the misplaced confidence that drives educational reformers to seek curricular innovation through disenchanted and reductive conceptions of human nature. Or, turning to Taylor, if full and robust meanings are really available in the world, perhaps educators should consider how their educational practice may problematically buffer students by encouraging them to secure for themselves atomistic "points" or "marketable degrees" at the expense of contact with transformative texts or works of art. And finally, if the most creative political possibilities are inherent in everyday, quotidian values, maybe educators could deploy Bilgrami's work to criticize the "experts" and "decision-makers" who govern

teachers using value-neutral language, and who create policy designed to help the disadvantaged but fail because of their atrophied receptivity to moral values.

Granting the possibility of using these re-enchantment proposals to inform educational practice, arguably the motivation to do so springs from their critique of a disenchanting social condition, which many teachers working in contemporary educational institutions understand pretty thoroughly. Interestingly enough, therefore, these re-enchantment proposals lead us back to Weber, because all of the above proposals spring (more or less) from a Weberian conception of a disenchanted social condition. Clarifying what Weber meant by this highlights a viable connection between educational practice and these contemporary re-enchantment proposals. However, establishing this connection is not my primary aim. My argument is that what Weber meant by a disenchanted social condition can be related to his pedagogy, and that this relationship will help educators to *think through* a disenchanting social condition, and thus supply a propaedeutic for my ultimate concern: associating the educator's cause with responsible re-enchantment.

5.3 A Disenchanted Orientation

The purpose of this section is to briefly define and note connections between Weber's (1) descriptions of a disenchanted social condition, (2) intellectual positions, and (3) conception of pedagogy. These are necessary first steps in my argument that Weber provides a distinct pedagogy for thinking through disenchantment.

5.3.1 A Disenchanted Social Condition

Weber provides two distinct but related definitions of disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) as a social condition. The first, more literal, definition is that magical or incalculable forces are no longer used to explain occurrences in the world. There is literally an *entz* (de-) *zauberung*

(magicization) of the world (cf. Green 2005, p. 52). This occurs, Weber explains, as rational methods and abstract rules begin to govern the conduct of man and nature; for every unknown occurrence, an expert (in principle) could give an explanation. Examples of this might be the mysterious death of hundreds of birds...or a gifted educator whose behaviors are boiled down by experts into core principles of successful teaching. Weber observes that a prevailing confidence in expert testimony does not necessarily imply a more enlightened or responsible population.

> Those of us who travel by streetcar—unless we are physicists—have no notion of how the streetcar works or what sets it in motion, and there is no need to know, either. All we need to know is that we can "depend" on it to behave in a certain way and can act accordingly, but as to how the streetcar is built so that it will move, of that we know nothing. The savage knows incomparably more about his tools (Weber 2008, p. 35).

The Rousseauian irony here is plain. The savage (presumably living in an enchanted world) knows incomparably more about how his world works (he makes his tools) than the modern urbanite, who is unfamiliar with the workings of his surrounding world (and sees the subway's arrival as good fortune). Yet the crucial difference is that, unlike the savage, the modern urbanite can get to the bottom of every mystery—should he decide to make the effort. As Weber explains,

> the knowledge or belief that *if* we *only wanted* to we *could* learn at any time that there are, in principle, no mysterious unpredictable forces in play, but that all things—in principle—can be *controlled through calculation*…No longer, like the savage, who believed that such forces existed, do we have to resort to magical means to gain control over or pray to the spirits. Technical means and calculation work for us instead (Weber 2008, ibid).

So, according to this first definition of a disenchanted social condition, expert testimony and calculations define and fix our expectation of the world's possibilities.[76]

The strong version of an enchanted education, on this definition, would be a magical education. The educator would be a sorcerer whose doings defy the causal nexus and natural laws; educational practice would involve feats like mind reading and teaching students through their dreams. A weaker version could simply teach students that just because a phenomenon can be successfully calculated does not mean it is appropriately captured or understood through calculation. For instance, the way a single student's independent thinking about algebraic insights informs his independent thinking about the ultimate meaning of his action in the world, or his calling, *could* assuredly be calculated. However, the expense would be tremendous and the results would be so particular and so far removed from a controlled environment that it is not clear how they would be useful in educational practice. The expectation that there is a scientific explanation for a particular student's formation may be true, but to seek general laws and pursue empirical proof would likely be fruitless.[77] The teacher who is aware that her educational practice may form a student's capacity to heed a future calling, on the other hand, does not proceed with the expectation that she will get to the bottom of exactly what her student should become. Instead, the educator *hopes* that the larger significance of her practice—her student's

[76] Certainly, there are exceptions. Trust in experts' testimony and their calculable explanations is not completely universal, even in our disenchanted society, for there is still a small space reserved for the incalculable. Modern hospitals, for instance, still employ religious chaplains to visit patients and pray for peace or healing. Granting such exceptions, Weber's sociological observation is that disenchantment according to this first definition is *mostly* the case. For instance, although hospitals employ chaplains, we do not go to hospitals to pray, but to "get to the bottom" of our physical ailments as their "technical means and calculation work for us instead."

[77] Cf. Weber's essay "Roscher and Knies" (2014).

independent thinking about the meaning of his action in the world—can be born through that very same practice.

Weber's second definition of disenchantment pertains to the fragmentation of social values. In a disenchanted age, previously unified social values become fragmented into autonomous value spheres, which Weber identified as religious, economic, political, aesthetic, erotic, and intellectual. To illustrate this definition, imagine a member of the Canaanite cult who finds correspondence between activities such as worshiping the male sky god and female earth goddess, sexual intimacy and procreation, labor in the field and the public celebration of the harvest (cf. Ricour 1995, ch. 2). But according to this second sense of disenchantment, the organic unity of modern life is broken into distinct value spheres with autonomous logics. When these distinct value spheres appear to find a comfortable unity in everyday life, what I referred to as a condition of confusion arises (chapter 2). So while in the Canaanite cult, to quote Friedrich Schiller, "Everything to the initiate's eye / showed a trace of a [g]od," the modern urbanite living in a disenchanted social condition may unequivocally distinguish between non-overlapping spheres of life (his or her religious life, sex life, financial life, and so on). As one scholar summarizes it, "meaning no longer resides in axiomatically shared and publicly inscribed beliefs which constitute the epistemic and moral community" (Jenkins 2000, p. 15). The common good is fragmented.

A strong version of an enchanted education, according to this definition, might be neatly captured by examples culled from the previous chapter: Dewey's vision of the school as an "embryonic community," or his religious vision of a society where everyday occupations evince "…the unification of human desire and purpose" (1960, p. 86). A weaker version, however, might accept the fact of pluralism in modern society and promote the value of non-fragmented

persons pursuing a calling in modern society. For instance, a person who is committed to political action for his cause so resolutely that he has no time for playing the role of campaign fund raiser by pandering to rich donors, or to mix commerce and politics. This politician might recognize that his political opponent operates in the same way. Here there is a shared commitment to the political calling in spite of competing conceptions of political good, and thus a weak version of enchantment according to this second definition.

Though these definitions of disenchantment are distinct, Weber took them both to spring from the same historical process. Weber explains both calculated realties and social fragmentation as the results of rationalization. Rationalization, as Weber understands it, is a phenomenon perpetuated by intellectuals—importantly, not educators—who sought to encompass all aspects of life (particularly its irrational aspects) with rational explanation. The origin of rationalization, according to Weber, is located in theodicies used to legitimate or compensate for the distribution of fortune in society—for instance, accounts distinguishing between the blessed and the cursed, the saved and the damned. The purpose of these religious accounts, says Weber, was to explain the irrational aspects of life with logical consistency. This involved dismissing recourse to magical explanations. As these religious accounts moved away from magical means, they became progressively rationalized through highly developed intellectual articulations (e.g., sophisticated theologies) and the systematization of institutions (e.g., sophisticated church bureaucracies). Then, through juridical labors, notions of legitimate and illegitimate fortune became formalized and codified in the political domain. So, if the first form of rationalization was increasingly sophisticated religious distinctions between categories like the blessed and the cursed, the second form of rationalization is increasingly sophisticated distinctions between actions the state deems lawful and unlawful. According to Weber's thesis,

in the modern West, all aspects of life became increasingly rationalized – i.e. increasingly calculated and fragmented, standardized and disconnected – leading to an age of disenchantment. Attempts to heed the incalculable or return to a past social unity may therefore be cast as attempts to partially recover something lost, or as proposals that favor a weaker version of re-enchantment.

Incidentally, I suspect that the field of philosophy of education is overflowing with attempts at re-enchantment. For instance, relating to the first definition of disenchantment, consider Gert Beista's recent claim that we should start to think about teaching in terms of "transcendence" and "[take] the idea and possibility of revelation seriously, as both a religious and secular concept" (2014, p. 56). Thinking about the teacher as a transcendent agent—one whose lessons are revelatory events—makes it literally impossible to operationalize teaching and measure teacher success. Thus if we think about improving teacher quality, according to Beista's implications, technical means and calculation *cannot* work for us because the lessons of a transcendent teacher must be utterly incalculable: *purely* an affair of grace. In a disenchanted age, the educational expert may naturally rejoin: "Are you serious?"

For a less conspicuous example, which elicits a solution for the second meaning of disenchantment, consider Randall Curren's recent claim that the insights of neo-Aristotelian philosophy, the demands of justice, and facts about "universal psychological needs," bid us to use education in a manner that promotes human flourishing. For Curren, this means introducing students to values from a variety of social spheres "by expanding and deepening students' understanding of what is valuable and enabling them to relate to things of value in ways that give their life *meaning*" (2013, p. 242). But how does this proposal take shape in practice? The attempt to envision the modern school in this manner, as a well of deeply meaningful social

values, is not aided by the fact that Curren provides no pedagogical illustrations. Curren's account of education can thus be read as playing something of an alchemic role, like Dewey, because he suggests that a fragmented social reality can be unified through educational institutions. Deeply meaningful values (e.g., religious, economic, political, aesthetic, erotic, and intellectual) cohere in a curriculum that aims at student flourishing. But the possibility of a harmony of diverse meaningful values in school is questionable. For instance, a sociologist or multicultural theorist might ask: " Can you not see that this school is rampant with antagonistic purposes?" These experts could also ask: "Are you serious?"

My suggestion that Beista and Curren are engaged in re-enchantment projects is meant to provoke doubt. I agree with them, and probably all philosophers of education, that the *meaning* of education and the conflict of *values* animating educational institutions should receive greater philosophical attention than these matters do today. At the same time, I do not think raising "Are you serious?" type questions to these proposals is at all unreasonable. For these various, indirect appeals to re-enchantment in philosophy of education tend to evoke ideas that ignore or evade the realities educators face while working in the bureaucratically organized schools described in chapter one. Against the tendency to animate the importance of education by recourse to either wholly incalculable events or wholly unified social spaces, Weber helps readers appreciate that disenchantment as a social condition is a deep-versus-superficial state of affairs. Shortcuts past a disenchanted social condition, particularly in an educational environment subjected to rationalization, are suspect as they evade or mystify the everyday realities of educators. How does one offer a solution that is not a shortcut? Curiously enough, I suggest, Weber's intellectual positions can provide a way forward.

5.3.2 Intellectual positions

Weber's understanding of the social world is premised upon two intellectual positions: the fact/value distinction and value collision. The fact/value distinction, as described in chapter two, relates to the first definition of disenchantment. Put simply, this distinction claims that there is a strict separation between descriptions, and empirical justification, and prescription, and normative justification. Phillip Gorski, a critic of Weber mentioned in chapter 2, describes the fact/value distinction in stark and categorical terms. Gorski explains that facts exist in an "intransitive realm that is clearly bounded from the influence of value" which means "values [are] subjective and relative" (2013, p. 546). Now if there were not an "intransitive realm" (which I take Gorski to mean something like a firewall) separating and distinguishing facts from values, then adopting a factual vs. an evaluative stance would be hard to distinguish. And yet, the importance of the fact/value distinction is affirmed throughout Weber's work. Therein the assumption reigns that humans in general (and students in particular) are more inclined towards affirming their own values than confronting inconvenient facts. But is Weber really advancing what Gorski calls an "instransitive realm?" Weber's description of "the (often hair-thin) line that separates science from belief" (Weber 2014, p. 137) does not seem to mesh with Gorski's conception of the fact/value distinction, but that is jumping ahead of my argument.

Value collision, as referenced throughout this dissertation, relates to the second definition of disenchantment and rests on the notion that if we want to understand the world as it is we must not look for unity or harmony of values but aim to understand how value spheres conflict. Values spheres—or religious, economic, political, aesthetic, erotic, and intellectual values—do not harmoniously coalesce, but rather collide. Weber uses the metaphor of polytheism to explain value collision in "Science as a Vocation,"

> as long as life remains immanent as is interpreted in its own terms, it knows only of an unceasing struggle of these gods with one another. Or speaking directly, the ultimately possible attitudes towards life are irreconcilable, and hence their struggle can never be brought to a final conclusion (1958, p. 152).

Now, once again, employing a metaphor of polytheism seems like an enchanting way to describe this methodological position, but again I am getting ahead of my argument.

For the time being, note that the fact/value distinction and value collision are both intellectual positions that appear to assume, if not entrench, a disenchanted social condition. Indeed, if these are the only ways of realistically understanding the social world, Weber appears to be denouncing any attempt to understand it otherwise. And if we join the philosophers mentioned above and are troubled by the features of a disenchanted social world (e.g., scientism, buffered selves, value-free policy), we should also be troubled by Weber's apparent defense of it. Furthermore, if we feel dismayed by initiatives resembling Weberian rationalization in educational reform, we should also be dismayed that Weber's pedagogical principles are premised on fact/value distinction and value collision.

5.3.3 Pedagogy

In his lecture "The Meaning of 'Value Freedom'" (first presented in 1914), we find an explicit statement of Weber's pedagogical principles. Weber remarks,

> what the student should learn above all from [his] professor in the *lecture hall* is (1) the ability to content himself with simply carrying out a given task; (2) to face facts—including (indeed: above all) those that are uncomfortable for him personally—and to distinguish between stating [such facts] and taking an evaluative stand with regard to them; (3) to rate his own person less highly than

> the task [before him]; and, consequently, to suppress the desire to parade, unbidden, his personal tastes or other feelings (2014, p. 307).

The presence of the fact/value distinction is explicit in item (2). Its purpose is to encourage students, through the professor's example, to prioritize the demands of a given academic task (and eventually, a moral task, or *cause*) above their personal preferences.

The espousal of value collision also undergirds Weber's pedagogical principles. Indeed, Weber's endorsement of teaching value collision—and assumptions about the condition of confusion—rests upon the strong claim that the social world will not be understood and self-knowledge (about one's *daemon*) will not be achieved if value collision is ignored. To recall a passage mentioned in chapter 2, endorsing value collision, says Weber, is tantamount to eating from the "fruit of the tree of knowledge;" it is necessary for a self-determined life, i.e. one that is "lived in full awareness" and one that "*chooses* its own fate—the *meaning*, that is, of its activity and being" (2014, p. 315). Even whilst pointing to "hair-thin" lines between science and belief, referencing battling gods, and evoking Plato's myth of Er, we might still have reason to believe that Weber does not simply endorse a disenchanted methodology, but, by inculcating these methodological positions, endorses forming disenchanted people, and espouses a "moral un-education" too (Gorski 2012, p. 99).

Indeed, given the link between Weber's methodological positions and pedagogy, there are good reasons to worry about the latter. Why, after all, must students learn to *think through* the disenchantment described by Weber when this social condition is so obviously problematic and liable to become inhumane by emphasizing the measureable to the exclusion of the meaningful? Moreover, even if Weber's description of a disenchanted social condition does capture the conditions of schooling today, we might still affirm that the meaning of education

should not be reduced to what is conveniently measurable and education should do something to mend the fragmentation of values in society—i.e. do something to approximate the common good and discover or create the criteria by which to assess it. Weber's pedagogy, at the end of the day, may only raise up students whose calling is to entrench the disaster of a disenchanted social condition and the educational institutions reproducing it. Prominent critiques of Weber can be read along these lines (cf. Strauss 1965, Habermas 1984). Nevertheless, I think that Weber, who could recognize that "the hopeless threat of disaster would not have made pedagogical sense" (Weber 1952, p. 324), has more pedagogical sense than even his astute critics care to acknowledge. This becomes clear when Weber's remarks on disenchantment are read to bear meaning beyond descriptions of a disenchanted social condition.

5.4 *Thinking Through* Disenchantment

Towards the end of "Science as a Vocation," there is a brilliant passage that belies the claim that Weber was intent on entrenching a disenchanted social condition. The passage begins with Weber reiterating the methodological positions that inform his conception of pedagogy. First speaking of value collision, Weber says,

> The assumption that I am presenting to you is based on the fundamental fact that life, as long as it exists in itself and is understood for what it is, knows only the eternal struggle of those gods with one another, or, in non-figurative language, it is about the irreconcilability of the *possible* ultimate attitudes to life and the impossibility of any resolution of the conflicts among them. (Weber 2008, p. 48)

Then Weber evokes the fact/value distinction,

> Whether or not under such [disenchanted] circumstances science is worthy to become a "vocation," and whether or not it has an objectively worthwhile "calling" itself, is again a

> value judgment about which nothing can be said in the lecture hall, as an affirmative answer is *presupposed* if any teaching is to take place there. I answer the question in the affirmative through my own work (Weber 2008, p. 48).

So far the teacher does not provide guidance, neither helping students to reconcile the constant struggle between values nor helping students to distinguish between salient facts and higher values. But the lines that follow suggest that something more is at stake. Weber writes,

> And I do it precisely from the standpoint that hates intellectualism and regards it as the worst devil, just as today's young people do, or—more often—imagine they do. There is a saying that applies to such people: "Reflect: the devil is old; grow old to understand him!" This has nothing to do with a date on a birth certificate. Rather, the sense is that we must not flee from the devil if we want to get the better of him, as so many do today, but must first become thoroughly acquainted with his ways, in order to see what his power and his limitations are (2008, p. 48).

This line does not seem to be void of direction. Quite the contrary: it evokes realism – "we must not flee from the devil" – but it also evokes something more "if we want to get the better of him." What is this "something more"? Recent scholarship provides hints.

Political philosopher, Jeffrey Green, argues that Weber is not simply referring to disenchantment as a social condition in his lecture "Science as a Vocation," but also testifying to disenchantment as a philosophical act. Like Nietzsche's *madman* proclaiming that "God is dead" to a crowd of unbelievers, Green claims that Weber's philosophical testimony "generates a moral direction out of the very insistence that moral direction is lacking" (2005, p. 55). According to

Green's interpretation, "Disenchantment, as a philosophical pronouncement, is thus engaged in two struggles: against those who think they possess what is in fact missing and against those who have no sense what is missing" (2005, p. 66). Depending upon the audience, in other words, Weber's testimony might bring about sober realism for those who "think they possess" what is missing, or might discomfit the romantics with "no sense" of what is missing. Thinking past the event of a momentous lecture, though, I am focused on what it would mean to engage in a Weberian practice of education amidst disenchanted educational institutions.

I think Green's insight can be extended to the intellectual positions that inform Weber's conception of pedagogy. To be sure, if these intellectual positions also testify to the philosophical meaning of disenchantment, then the claim that Weber's pedagogy helps us to *think through* disenchantment becomes less absurd and more akin to the contemporary re-enchantment proposals mentioned above.

Basit Bilal Koshul's work in *The Postmodern Significance of Max Weber's Legacy* (2005) supports this move. Koshul claims that Weber should not be read merely as a child of the Enlightenment, because Weber's work "contains valuable resources if one is committed to the idea that disenchantment needs to be disenchanted" (p. 120). For the task of teaching disenchantment, Koshul's phrase "disenchanting disenchantment" suggests that Weber is not leading students into either a state of nihilism/emotivism (chapter 2) or fanaticism (chapter 3), nor merely providing a philosophical oration on disenchantment as Green suggests. The phrase "disenchanting disenchantment" suggests instead that Weber is encouraging students to see that there is something deeply senseless about reducing the world around them to a disenchanted social condition, for a disenchanted social condition undergirds the "cosmos" of capitalism (Weber 2003, p. 181) that mutes callings. Noting this tendency of Weber's to get beyond

disenchantment leads Donald Macrae to jest that he is really a closeted magician—"a Prospero who must bury his staff under the gray sky of everyday rationality"—whose true *lesson* echoes the Satyr in Stephan George's poem: "it is only through magic that life stays awake" (Macrae 1974, pgs. 97-99).[78] Macrae is not wrong, but a less playful, more accurate way to describe what Weber is doing is to take the term *lesson* more seriously. Understanding disenchantment, as Weber teaches it, begs thinking through it.

The intended direction of thought can be discerned by comparing disenchantment and rationalization with Weber's conception of bureaucracy. To recall a line quoted in chapter 2, the historian Wolfgang J. Mommsen observes,

> Weber deliberately accentuated the hierarchal as well as the impersonal features of bureaucratic institutions, because he believed that through them the social as well as psychological conditions of modern man would be significantly altered. Seen from this vantage point, Weber's theory of bureaucracy was an *exercise in defending humanity.* (emphasis added, 1992, p. 115)

I do not think it a stretch to claim that Weber's accentuated descriptions of disenchantment and rationalization accomplish the very same purpose. Furthermore, I think they can also be read pedagogically, as exercises in educating humanity. There is a tacit demand in Weber's conception of pedagogy that students learn to get the better of a disenchanted social condition. This tacit demand does not evoke Satyrs, or strong versions of enchantment, but a fuller conception of humanity. It evokes people who have learned to affirm the "*meaning* … of [their]

[78] The poem is called "Goat and Man." The context of this line is a debate between a Satyr and a man. As Macrae describes, "George has the goat-man sneer, "You are but man … our wisdom begins where your wisdom ends." The man replies that the day of myth is over and the Satyr's time is done. Yet, says the Satyr, "it is only through magic that life stays awake (*Nur duch den Zauber bleibt das Leben wach*)" (p. 99).

activity and being" in the world, people who heed the *beckoning* of the task calling them, and people who have learned to meet demands of the day despite the cosmos of capitalism.

5.5 Teaching Re-enchantment

These rhapsodic lines may seem to run contrary to the appeal to realism that I used to philosophers of education like Beista and Curren. If Weber's teaching of disenchantment is directed towards a fuller conception of humanity, as I have just claimed, then it is a good time to inquire whether Weber's teaching of disenchantment is one sobered by social realities or intoxicated by a cause. Oddly enough, the answer is both. The Weberian educator must ever toe that "(often hair-thin) line that separates science from belief," and in doing so must balance a disenchanting political realism with a re-enchanting romanticism, attending to both the crushing realities and the lofty aspirations. As far as I have read, there is nothing resembling Weber's position in the field of philosophy of education today. However, rather than pasting together two general terms, such as *realism* and *romanticism*, a surer explication of Weber's pedagogy can be achieved by considering what occurs when Weber's intellectual positions, described above, supplement each other.

We must now recall that the intellectual position of value collision—according to Weber—is premised upon the importance of a person's self-examination and profound deliberation about the meaning of their life. If people's lives are not to be carried out in a shallow manner, says Weber, then they must not "evade the choice between 'God' and the 'Devil,' and the fundamental personal decision as to which of the conflicting values belongs to the realm of one, and which to the other" (2014, p. 315). According to critics (cf. Habermas 1984) this valorization of personal decision may result in fanaticism: the reduction of the world, and the rational resistance it affords, to a person's cause. But the Weberian educator does not simply let a

person's cause be, but encourages him to consider it carefully, at a distance and with respect to inconvenient truths (cf. chapter 3).

How exactly does an educator provide students with distance from an urgent cause? For Weber, careful guidance occurs by teaching students the history of value conflicts that are occurring in the present. This is how the fact/value distinction bears upon value collision or the condition of confusion. Instead of leaving students in the fray to make sense of the various value conflicts in their lives without support, and instead of playing the role of a modern sophist who advises students on the quickest path to any desired life, the Weberian educator guides students by teaching them the history of contemporary value conflicts. The educator instructs students about the course of human interests (material and ideal) and also about the *demands* of ideas that have "like switchmen … determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (Weber 1958, p. 208). A student may arbitrarily choose to ignore these ideas and their course. However, the Weberian educator challenges such a student with the possibility that the cause he is compelled by has fueled human interests long before this particular "desire to parade, unbidden, his personal tastes or other feelings" (2014, p. 307). Recalling a point made in Chapter 3, the Weberian educator would remind students that they have been habituated by the tracks, images, interest, values, and ideas that have preceded them. In short, if they are to proceed meaningfully, they must realize that they are partially determined by meanings enacted in a condition of confusion. Should a student seriously desire to play the role of a "switchman," or lay down entirely new tracks for *his* cause, this student should understand the magnitude of the task, says Weber, and learn "to rate his own person less highly than the task" (Weber 2014, p. 307).

The fact/value distinction thus provides substantive and realistic guidance for students

living amidst a world with a meaningful history. Yet the intellectual distinction between facts and values does not remain purely intellectual when it is substantiated and given life by a particular student's prior habituation, knowledge, and desires. The "hair-thin" line between facts and values does not remain fixed in the same way, but must be adjusted on a case-by-case basis when teaching particular students. This way, particular students learn to internalize this distinction—described in chapter 4 as a distinction between science and politics—so that they can decide whether a practical problem arising in life demands distance or urgency.

It is also important to note, recalling an argument made in chapter 2, that the Weberian educator who challenges students to see their desires and values impartially is not encouraging nihilism, which would reduce all commitments to preferences and render all causes equally desirable. This cannot be the case. For, if it were, Weber would endorse the notion that committing to a particular cause is the same as committing to no cause at all. But the Weberian educator clearly privileges engaged commitment with particular ideas and larger insights about the meaning of one's action in the world, and therefore seeks to clarify students' understanding of what commitment to *x* cause demands. As a distinguished Weber scholar Fritz Ringer observes: "...[Weber] *clearly* dreamt of individuals who are moved by conscious principle and by a commitment to a 'cause' rather than by the all-too-human tendency to 'adjust'" (emphasis added 2010, p. 255).

So described, the fact/value distinction is used to strengthen and mature the student's resolve, not to mold them into nihilists or relativists or consumers. Italian sociologist Franco Ferrarotti helpfully observes,

> [Weber's understanding of] objectivity … is produced for man in reference to his need to enter into meaningful relations with the world and other men. It is objectivity for man

> himself, not concretized in a relativistic drift but, on the contrary, in taking positions in full awareness and rationally (scientifically) testing his own potentialities in a given situation. (1982, p. 23-24)

Objectivity, on this view, becomes a personal aspiration versus a given outcome, a solid subjectivity versus a "view from nowhere" (Nagel 1986). But what stops this sober aspiration for objectivity from inoculating the problem of value collision and evading action that must be undertaken by the "striving person" in a world where diverse values conflict (Weber 2014, p. 102)?

The Weberian educator who supplements the fact/value distinction with value collision, what I have called the condition of confusion, does not simply rest content with disseminating value-free facts. An indirect pedagogy on the limits of intellectual explanation is at play, too. When presenting facts about a particular cause, the educator must indirectly acknowledge that there is *something more* than what can be captured by scientific explanations. Scientific explanations are only one response to the world, and while they have manifest power, they also have limitations—particularly when the world assumes an expert's testimony is the final word, and the value of independent thinking is pushed aside, and the striving person is consigned to gambling for higher stakes in the cosmos of capitalism.

Recalling Green's observation that Weber taught disenchantment as a philosophical pronouncement indicates that the Weberian educator must not shy away from value collision when providing students with scientific (academic) explanations of causes in the world. Any presentation of facts is undergirded by intellectual values (e.g., trends, precision, rigor), and these values—even the value of rational consistency itself—need not monopolize reality. The

achievement here is not to ignore reason or evade the history of rationalism, but to be consciously aware of its limitations.

Pascal enigmatically writes, "Reason's last step is the recognition that there are an infinite number of things which are beyond it. It is merely feeble if it does not go as far as to realize that" (Pascal 1984, p. 85). I think supplementing the fact/value distinction with value collision provides an analogous reminder for students encouraged to think through disenchantment as the fruit of rationalization, because diverse values will be part of and arise from a world that is not utterly disenchanted. The persuasive pull of these values as *causes* cannot be exhausted by third-person explanations or expert testimony. Whether a person decides to affirm a cause premised upon a social vision of the world as a mixture of religious blessings and curses, economic efficiencies and inefficiencies, political responsibilities and convictions, erotic climaxes and seductions, or aesthetic forms and materials is not a decision made by embracing the cause of scientific vocation alone. Weber might say the assessments of an expert in our disenchanted universities are "merely feeble if [he or she] does not go as far as to realize that" (Pascal 1984, p. 85) But, more to the point, Weber would say that an educator who, taking after a positivist like Auguste Comte, presents scientific explanations as the means to integrating all values is an educator who botches the task of guiding students (as particular persons) to think through a disenchanted social condition.[79] Totalizing scientific explanations fails because they do not encompass all values and are liable to neglect particular causes. The Weberian educator knows this. She acknowledges a pantheon of values in the world but does not presume to govern it in the classroom. Instead, she envisions her cause, a fuller conception of humanity: students

[79] Though far from the course of this project, this failure is brilliantly depicted in Leopoldo Zea's *Positivism in Mexico*. The title repays attention given Comte's immodest claim to be an "educator of humanity."

learning to understand the "*meaning* … of [their] activity and being;" students learning to actively respond to the beckoning of the task before them; and students heeding the demands of the day in modern educational institutions. This is a long, and perhaps rhapsodic, way of saying that the Weberian educator, who beholds her students working particular ideas, recognizes the demands of the day and foresees their educated callings, and is thereby enchanted by the momentous significance of her work.

5.6 The Enchanted Educator

To recall the puzzle that launched this dissertation, I find it highly suggestive that in "Science as a Vocation"—a testimony to the disenchantment of the world—Weber opts to leave the educator enchanted. He claims "*diese Kunst ist eine persönliche Gabe*" ("This art is a *personal gift*")—a phrase he uses elsewhere to denote charisma, divinity, or grace—"and by no means necessarily coincides with the scientific abilities of a scholar" (Weber 1958 p. 79). There is a big difference between the expert's explanation and the educator's art. Inside the classroom, the Weberian educator is not serving the ideas of specialized scholarship; she is echoing the immediate demands and future callings of her particular students. Her cause, we might say, is to echo the demands of a fuller conception of humanity through her particular students, re-enchanting the world on a case-by-case basis. Specifically, the Weberian educator heeds her cause by *educating* her students' capacity for a calling: for taking an active responsibility for a cause in the world and simultaneously remaining faithful to themselves. To work at this cause, the educator must provoke her students' active responsibility for particular content in manner that contributes to and anticipates the formation of the ultimate meaning of their obligations in the world, experienced and lived out as their "demands of the day."

"So any end goes?" Familiar deflationary objections can be raised here, once again, such as whether the Weberian educator would be content to educate a young Hitler to recognize and affirm his calling. These objections distract from appreciating the passionate commitment of a teacher who serves particular students according to their reception of causes in the world. Put another way, these quick objections focus on the product (good, evil, marketable, mediocre) and not on how much a teacher would need to care for her students to (1) content herself with "simply carrying out a given task"; (2) face facts "including (indeed: above all) those that are uncomfortable for [her] personally" and distinguish "between stating [such facts] and taking an evaluative stand with regard to them"; (3) rate her "own person less highly than the task [before her]; and, consequently … suppress the desire to parade, unbidden, [her] personal tastes or other feelings" (Weber 2014, p. 307). In short, those who would raise deflationary objections skip over the educational practice of teaching particular students and try to get straight to the student-as-product. The objection misfires because a Weberian philosophy of education does not presume to foresee the student-as-product. Jumping back and forth between educational practice and educational outcomes, as the objection bids us to do, is really a strategy for neglecting educational practice and its slow labor. The deflationary objection, foreseeing the student-as-product, misses the unobtrusive enchantment of educational practice: the personal gift of recognizing, awakening, testing, and guarding the independent thinking of others. This is the educator's cause.

Expressed in terms of the contemporary re-enchantment proposals mentioned earlier, hopefully in a manner that makes their insights relevant to educators, the personal gifts the Weberian educator bestows might be: (1) less anxiety about meaninglessness of the modern world, as people critically affirm the "*meaning* … of [their] activity and being;" (2) points of

contact with fullness, through people who heed the beckoning of the tasks calling them; and (3) creative social and political possibilities raised by people who know how to recognize the power and limitations of expert testimony and value-neutral policies, and work for sorely neglected causes. These are people who elevate the ethical status of everyday life by meeting *their* "demands of the day."

5.7 Towards Responsible Re-Enchantment

The purpose of this chapter has been to argue that Weber's work provides a propaedeutic for responsible re-enchantment. This involves first understanding the social realities of disenchantment, but also teaching about and amidst disenchanting social conditions in a way that provokes students to think through them. Weber's teaching of disenchantment moves simultaneously towards greater political realism and a greater romanticism. To recall Green's description, "Disenchantment, as a philosophical pronouncement, is thus engaged in two struggles: against those who think they possess what is in fact missing and against those who have no sense what is missing" (2006, p. 66). Weber's pedagogy for thinking through disenchantment helps students to realistically acknowledge our disenchanted social condition (i.e. to realize what is missing and the institutions, experts, and expectations that insure its absence), but also to romantically overcome this condition by responding to causes amidst such a condition.

It is tempting to imagine that this synthesis amounts to a lonely teacher railing against educational institutions, engaging in actions that Karl Löwith described as "the contradiction, always conquered anew, between the recognition of a rationalized world and the counter-tendency towards freedom for self-responsibility" (Löwith 1993, p. 77), or perhaps what Rogers Brubaker called an "ethos of engaged opposition" and "responsible struggle" (Brubaker 1984, p.

111). But portraying the educator as merely coping in an 'iron cage' is to miss the significant cause afforded to her by a Weberian philosophy of education. The educator who compels students to take an active responsibility for ideas that arise in the classroom, the educator who hopes her work is continuous and will contribute to her students' educated callings, works for a weighty purpose. Through educational practice, through the slow labor of education, she responsibly re-enchants the world, "from person to person and *pianissimo*" (Weber 2008, p. 51).

Touching. But this image, perhaps like all appeals to educational practice that do not pay homage to the norm of institutional realism (mentioned in chapter 1), appears too slight to leverage against an educational climate animated by a frenzy of economic and political aims, which, over the course of time, have managed to push it towards increasing Weberian rationalization (cf. Mehta 2013). In such a climate, an appeal to the notion of re-enchantment springing from an educator who is deeply concerned with the formation of her students' lives can quickly sound sentimental. To become more persuasive, at least today, it would demand the support of educational experts and must be corroborated with evidence (business quotas, brain scans, and big data), for whatever the educator's good intentions may be, it remains true that "technical means and calculation work for us instead" (Weber 2008, p. 31). The demand for evidence to ground and improve educational practice becomes particularly persuasive in the cosmos of capitalism, which "educates [*erzieht*] and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest." There seems to be an elective affinity, in other words, between the voices of experts subjecting the educator's cause and the immense economic forces clearly shaping her student's aspirations. Thus to talk of the educator and re-enchantment, it might be said, is merely to make a groundless, sentimental appeal. Indeed, it is a telling sign of a disenchanted age when appeals to inappropriately calculable ideas about

education are taken to be appeals to subjective experience or an unreasonable, personal sentiment alone.

Yet the decision-makers determining the grounds and urgency of educational reform have wholly neglected the quality of action springing from internal commitments. Whether a student heeds the demands of an idea springing from an intellectual problem or simply learns to master a rote task assigned by educational institutions is an inconsequential distinction from their perspective. Yet, if the argument of this dissertation holds, their perspective entails a meager conception of humanity. For just as it does not matter whether the student heeds the demands of ideas or merely demonstrates mastery, from this perspective it does not matter if people think independently about the demands of the day so long as they adjust to the given political and economic demands of the "cosmos" of capitalism (Weber 2003, p. 181). In short, there is continuity between their conception of education and the low value they ascribe to independent thinking about the demands of the day. They thus promote a slight and impoverished conception of humanity. An educator who works *for* her particular students and prioritizes educational practice inevitably resists this stunted conception of education. She does this, simply, by prioritizing education and acknowledging the formative trajectory of particular ideas as her particular students take them up. Her resistance is not simply motivated by a lone "responsible struggle" (Brubaker 1984, p. 111) against the inhumanity of educational institutions, but is also motivated by the fuller conception of humanity that is harbored by her cause.

But how can the vision of the Weberian educator gain traction in today's outcome-focused, educational climate when she is forced to work with unpredictable human material? One place to start would be to simply observe classrooms in anticipation, as if persons were coming to be and as if their agency were developing in the classroom. David T. Hansen has

admirably learned to watch and wonder in this manner. He asks: "Where are the moral dimensions of teaching? Are they in the eye of the beholder? Or are they there in the classroom 'spread around' and over and in the actions of teachers and students? If they are there to be seen how does one learn to see them?" (Hansen 2007, p. 50). Hansen's questions are poignantly raised in a disenchanted school system—where moments of enchantment are not pronounced and little resembles the "stirring of the prophetic spirit that once spread through the great communities like a raging fire and welded them together" (Weber 2008, p. 51).

However, it is important to ask what witnessing and reflecting upon quiet re-enchantment in the classroom serves to accomplish beyond capturing moral or aesthetic moments for the enjoyment of spectators. A cynic might remark: "You have a preference for seeing education this way rather than that. What you say is nice, but why should we listen to it?" Hansen (et. al.) remark that classroom observation focused on moments of the students' formation as persons supplies working knowledge, which constitutes "[an] invitation, an opportunity, and what feels like a calling" (2014, p. 169). While it is exceptional and admirable for an educational scholar to heed a calling to attend to educational practice, and work like Hansen's certainly does not bid educators to become what I called in my first chapter "institutional adjusters" or "institutional resisters", a lingering worry is that documenting moments of re-enchantment in contemporary educational institutions leaves the educator in her present state, beset by chance obstructions and magical moments, struggling to prioritize educational practice but without any authority. For what good reason should the educator's cause gain authority against perspectives that proceed by distrusting its reality and scoffing at its efficacy?

Conclusion

6.1 Rehearsing the Argument

The general claim I have sought to defend in this dissertation is that philosophers of education can best reflect upon the fundamental obligation to prioritize educational practice by reflecting upon its ideal qualities realistically, that is, *despite* and *given* contemporary educational institutions and their situation in a (non-ideal and pluralistic) modern society. Although educational institutions are shaped by a host of colliding social interests and values—whether these be parental, political, religious, economic, or intellectual—the motivation for prioritizing educational practice involves the lives of particular students, i.e. the persons an education should work for. And it is the ideal quality of the fundamental obligation of education that best expresses the demand that none of the interests or values animating educational institutions (or society at large) should shape students, unless they can be understood and affirmed by particular students as *their "*demands of the day," that is, unless these interests and values can support a student's educated calling. I have sought to demonstrate that Max Weber's conception of education provides the resources for forming a philosophy of education. By resources I have not simply meant Weber's explicit remarks about education, but also the way in which his work sheds light on the relevant concerns, arguments, and questions that philosophers of education should address today. My argument has been that a Weberian philosophy of education provides a timely means for reflecting upon the ideal quality of the fundamental obligation to prioritize educational practice—an educated calling—and that it does so in a realistic manner, acknowledging the confusions, conflicts, and external demands animating educational institutions in modern society.

Although much of this dissertation has been driven forward by posing objections, such as the objection that Weber is a relativist (chapter 2), ignores habituation (chapter 3), or impoverishes social experience (chapter 4), the positive account of a Weberian philosophy of education springs from Weber's conception of ideas as mysterious, non-specialized, and obligating, and the claim that the Weberian educator who teaches students to think independently about particular ideas does so with the anticipation of their educated calling. The central tenet of a Weberian philosophy of education is an educated calling. I analyzed this tenet as active responsibility bearing upon the ideas arising from a student's self-examination or *daemon* (chapter 2), which involves a student's relationship to the world (habituation) and the demands arising from it, or *causes* (chapter 3). In chapter 4, I defended the worth of an educated calling in modern society. Expressed as a formula, a skeletal sketch of my positive account of a Weberian philosophy of education runs as follows:

educated callings = active responsibility (*daemon* & *cause*)

In chapter 5, then I considered the Weberian educator's social vision. I added the term "responsible re-enchantment," and augmented the formula as follows:

educated callings = active responsibility (daemons & causes) → *responsible re-enchantment*

I think this formula readily communicates the structure of the dissertation, but the structure can also be captured through a deductive argument. I offer it to readers at this stage of the dissertation as a means of assessing its argument. The argument, a hypothetical syllogism, runs as follows:

(1) If the Weberian educator prioritizes educational practice and attends to her particular students' independent thinking, then she is conceiving of students as persons whose

responses to the "demands of the day" shape their ideas about their lives, or (expressed by analogy) their *daemons*.

(2) If the educator conceives of students as imminent and everyday *daemon*-like persons, then she cannot neglect her students' worlds: both their habituation and their ethical "demands" for changing it, or *causes.*

(3) If the educator attends to her students' habituation in modern society and the demands of acting for a *cause* (or ethical task), then she hopes that her daily work echoing the demands of particular ideas will someday re-echo as the demands of her students' callings despite our modern society's prioritization of a success ethic and its spurning of callings.

Therefore, the Weberian educator who prioritizes the practice of educational and attends to her students' independent thinking, hopes her work will one day echo the demands of her students educated calling in modern society. The Weberian educator's cause envisions a fuller conception of humanity. I have called this vision of educated callings: responsible re-enchantment. Thus, from the Weberian educator, who prioritizes educational practice and attends to her particular students, springs a particular gift:

the source of responsible re-enchantment.

This is the positive argument of my dissertation. I submit its soundness and cogency to the reader's judgment.

The subheading of this dissertation reads "Towards a Weberian Philosophy of Education," because I do not think it offers a definitive Weberian philosophy of education. Besides the obvious need to better understand Weber and his legions of commentators, there is a greater need for me, namely, to better articulate why I am drawn to Weber's work. Weber bids us

to think about education in a more limited, more realistic, and more pessimistic way, but does so, as I see it, in order to for us to *better* reflect upon, not avoid, educational practice and its ideal qualities. The prospect of better understanding this tension between realism and romanticism, for lack of better terms, is why I continue to be motivated by my study of Weber. My highest ambition as a philosopher of education, however, is not to write *the* definitive Weberian philosophy of education, but rather to articulate a philosophy of education that both grounds and quickens the responsibility to educate. Moving towards a Weberian philosophy of education is not an end-in-itself, but a labor that compels self-clarification and a sense of responsibility. Weber has thus been the educator of—and not purveyor of—this ambition.

6.2 Next Steps

I would like to conclude this dissertation by briefly mentioning how the perspective of the Weberian educator might govern the reform of educational institutions and the public's conception of educational practice. At present, as I suggested in the introduction, employees of educational institutions have difficulty taking responsibility for the priority of educational practice. I explained that employees of educational institutions have trouble prioritizing educational practice because they are either (a) employed as educational experts, decision-makers, or administrators to design and enforce impersonal, institutional guidelines, or (b) they must work with the tension of living *off* of educational institutions while working *for* particular students.[80]

So, what power does the educator's perspective have to change this state of affairs? The answer is, at present, very little. But to inquire how the educator's vision might govern the

[80] I fully realize that educational administrators also feel the tension between living off educational institutions and working for particular students (and teachers). I would not object to the claim that they, at times, feel it in more pronounced ways. But this amounts to an idle debate given the argument of this dissertation.

reform of educational institutions is to raise a question about her normative authority to do so:[81] that is, the good reasons supporting the assertion that the Weberian educator's vision should have authority over the domains of educational reform and the public's education about education. I do hope the good reasons amount to more than this negative claim: because educational policy-makers and the testing regime is awful, that's why.

But a caveat is in order. To be very clear, the argument of this dissertation will be undermined if the power of the educator's vision moves beyond the purview of the classroom or lecture hall and proceeds to renege upon the fundamental obligation to prioritize educational practice. The aim of philosophy of education, as I see it, is not covert political philosophy. The aim of this field *is* to understand how and why an educator goes about prioritizing educational practice. The educator who does so catches sight of particular persons in formation as they heed the demands of ideas. Presenting ideas to "untrained and receptive mind[s]" (Weber 2008, p. 30) and echoing the demands of these ideas is the source of the Weberian educator's authority. Political actors, on the other hand – at least in a mass democracy – hope to capture and move crowds. They aim to secure the power to define what is mass and public. Political authority, as Sheldon Wolin observes, "…is distinguished from other forms of authority in that it speaks in the name of a society considered in its common quality…that the order that political authority presides over is one that should extend throughout the length and breadth of society as a whole" (2004, p. 11). The claim that the educator's authority is a form of covert political authority, i.e. an ability to define political "goods" or secure evidence of broad social progress, is one I take to be a categorical mistake. The educator only begins to appear like a political authority when the

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[81] I am not referencing Weber's descriptive definition of authority, which is used synonymously with domination: "…the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (Weber 1978, p. 212).

grace of any particular student's independent thinking is forgotten and the priority of educational practice is ignored. Although magnifying the political implications of education might be a viable strategy for investing philosophy of education with significance, the practice of education, as I have sought to demonstrate, need not be associated with momentous political possibilities to justify its significance.

A Weberian philosophy of education claims that momentous moral and existential significance resides in particular persons working ideas. The Weberian educator gains authority by echoing the demands of particular ideas and, because of the incalculable, non-specialized, and obligating aspects of ideas, by pointing to a moral and existential reality that makes demands of particular persons. Put otherwise, the authority of the Weberian educator deals with a person's "immediate responsibility," not a person's association with common images, slogans or brands – that is, not with a person's "reduced sense of responsibility," the psychological state that seems to be a prerequisite for political action in a mass democracy (Schumpeter 2008, p. 261-262). So I ask again, how might the Weberian educator's specific form of authority bear upon the reform of educational institutions and the formation of the public?

6.2.1 Governing Educational Institutions

I concluded chapter 5 by mentioning the quiet charisma of the Weberian educator as she prioritizes educational practice. I raised the question about how philosophers of education who recognize this charisma might better persuade decision-makers, experts, and administrators, i.e. those who are not directly involved with educational practice, to prioritize it? I take this to run parallel to the question of the educator's normative authority and the good reasons supporting the transformation of educational institutions according to the Weberian educator's perspective.

Recall how I mentioned in chapter 1 that education would be a profession without dignity if it did not involve a relationship with particular students. This dissertation has spent a considerable amount of time developing the motivation to educate particular students by analyzing the meaning of an educated calling. Nevertheless, it has said very little about the dignity of the Weberian educator. By dignity I mean the esteem the Weberian educator should receive from others based upon her educational practice. A correlate of the Weberian educator's dignity would be her contempt for administrators or other educators who treat education as though it lacked a cause.[82] I think the Weberian educator's evaluative attitudes hold the key to extending the sway of her authority. More specifically, I contend that educational institutions should be transformed by the evaluative attitudes of the Weberian educator, insofar as they spring from her obligation to prioritize educational practice. Why is this the case?

The Weberian educator's evaluative attitudes should transform educational institutions because they are nearest to the practice of education. Yet they are not synonymous with the practice of education. As Robert Paul Wolff observes in his brilliant chapter "A Discourse on Grading," *evaluation* and *ranking* do not serve an educational function; according to Wolff, only *criticism* does as "the analysis of a product or performance for the purpose of identifying and correcting its faults or reinforcing its excellences" (1969, p. 59). The Weberian educator, who echoes the demands of ideas, is engaged in what Wolff calls criticism. However, the Weberian educator's dignity and contempt for wayward administrators and educators clearly involves evaluation and ranking (a comparative or positional aspect). Again, evaluation and ranking are not synonymous with the practice of education. Granting this, my claim is still that the Weberian educator's evaluative attitudes are most reliable for transforming educational institutions because

[82] For more on contempt, see especially Bell (2013) but also Darwall (2013).

they are nearest to the practice of education. An administrator or politician who seeks sweeping reform may be motivated by a compelling image of schools as a whole or the state of education writ large, but his evaluative attitudes – even if supported by numbers and sanctions – are far removed from the practice of education. An example will help demonstrate what I intend to say about this difference between the educator's and the administrator's evaluative attitudes.

Imagine a major urban school district has elected a new superintendent. The superintendent promises to make radical gains, and proceeds by whipping school principals into shape. Let us say a particular school delivers on the superintendent's promises and makes unprecedented gains in test performance. The superintendent lavishes praise upon the principal and teachers, and all parties receive awards and bonuses. Unfortunately, it then becomes clear that the principal and teachers cheated on the test results and the superintendent was complicit in the scam. Now public disapprobation is cast on all parties.[83] One response is that this bunch are simply bad apples—the exception, not the rule. Another response, however, is that the very occurrence of this scam betrays a disconcerting gap between an educational decision-maker's evaluative attitudes and means of justifying them, and the practice of education as it occurs on the ground. The Weberian educator's contempt, in this case, would not be aimed at cheating on the tests per se, but at the deference paid to a practice that has scant educational value and no capacity to echo the demands of particular students' ideas and thereby participate in their formation as persons. The Weberian educator's evaluative attitude is not synonymous with the practice of education, but it is closest to it because the Weberian educator feels an "immediate responsibility" for her students' thinking.

[83] Specifically, I have in mind the testing scandals in Atlanta Georgia ca. 2009. But a similar scandal occurred in D.C. (ca. 2010).

An argument for another day is that heeding the educator's evaluative attitudes provides a better form of accountability than top-down bureaucratic management or economic incentives and sanctions based upon performance. If the purpose of educational institutions is to house educational practice, than the educator's evaluative attitudes form the best way to hold them accountable. This does not mean educators are free from criticism; it means they evaluate each other, and participate in a network of evaluations.

Were I to flesh this idea out, I would likely connect my argument to the recent work of Philip Pettit and Geoffry Brennan called *The Economy of Esteem* (2005). Quite relevantly for the purposes of my project, Pettit and Brennan's work was motivated by the treatment of educators in Australia. They write: "Like many countries, Australia has begun to submit teachers and academics to a pattern of relentless scrutiny and continuous accounting that consumes an extraordinary amount of time, demoralizes and destabilizes those in the business of education, and makes the education profession less and less attractive to young talent (2005, p. 6). Pettit and Brennan respond by recalling the economy of esteem: namely, how the formation of evaluative attitudes can discipline people and hold them accountable, and, at least in the case of education, can do so more effectively than the "iron fist" of a bureaucratic command structure or the "invisible hand" of a market. My argument would be that the Weberian educator's dignity, secured by working for particular students, also grounds her normative authority to hold an institution and its employees accountable. As I foresee the conclusion of this argument, educational institutions have zero need for the managerial class of educational administrators who currently govern them. Their positions could be effectively eliminated without any real loss

if technology were effectively utilized,[84] if the evaluative attitude of the Weberian educator exerted its due power, and if the public came to understand that granting such power to educators is not arbitrary, but springs from the fundamental obligation to prioritize educational practice.

6.2.2 Educating the Public

There is reason to believe that the public is not well positioned to take responsibility for the priority of educational practice. Public reflection on "education" is largely conveyed through newsworthy events, or sensational occurrences demanding immediate action or decision. Violent crimes in schools present an obvious example, yet significant media attention is also given to strife surrounding educational policy: issues such as Universal Pre-K, common core standards, and the cost of higher education. It is important for the media to report on educational policies; the direction of these policies will determine the shape of educational institutions. And yet, educational policies are not settled by educational practice, by what decent educators aspire to do on a daily basis, but rather by the organization and amplification of educational interests, legal procedures, and, ultimately, by elites with the power to make political or economic decisions. The fundamental obligation under consideration, the priority of educational practice, does not feel like a public concern. Understandably, it is difficult for the public to reflect upon educational

[84] What I mean here certainly requires further explanation. Roughly, I think machines could effectively enforce the impersonal rule of law in educational institutions. For instance, the teacher who shows up late to work one day need not be caught and chastised by an administrator, but the event should be documented. If the pattern continues, other teachers will perceive its negative effect the institution's commitment to educational practice. However, if this is a one-time occurrence, and the teacher generally is giving her best effort, then the administrator's lecture serves no purpose. Moreover, if a group of teachers evaluate this teacher as neglectful (or incompetent) in her practice of education, then she could use data to make a case for her position. "Look, I leave work three hours late everyday (etc.); I am doing my best. Give me another shot." As opposed to mass accountability schemes, these sorts of discussions (which utilize data collected by machines) could occur as "community maintenance." The real discipline, however, would come from a collective effort to uphold educators' dignity.

practice in a state of affairs where education only becomes subject to reflection through the lens of newsworthy events—in short, through spectacles of what it should not be.

The final question I will take up is: how can the public be led to reflect upon educational practice in a manner that motivates them to prioritize it? Perhaps through continuous academic inquiry about educational practice, the results of which are artistically presented by the media. This is John Dewey's response in *The Public and Its Problems* (1988). Dewey writes that "…a genuine social science would manifest its reality in the daily press" (p. 180), and that an organized, articulate public can come into being when "…free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication" (1988 p. 184). Applied to the subject at hand, this means that social scientists would conduct inquiries about educational practice, then artists would dramatize and illustrate the results, and the media would communicate them. I see no reason why Weber would disagree with this approach. However, at least based upon this dissertation, I am not sure it sufficiently captures what Weber meant by the social scientist being a "national educator" (Scaff 1977, p. 131). More specifically, while it might capture what it means to present ideas to "…untrained but receptive minds" (Weber 2008, p. 30), it does not seem likely to capture the Weberian educator's role in provoking students to take an active responsibility for their lives by echoing the demands of particular ideas. It is also unclear to me, based on reasons supplied in chapter 4, that Dewey's approach would sufficiently provoke the public to take an active responsibility for education in modern society. Of course, Weber was not so naïve as to think that actions are governed by the demands of ideas alone.

As Weber famously claims in "The Social Psychology of World Religions," "…material and ideal interests, directly govern the conduct of men..." That is, according to the subject at hand, the *de facto* motivation to educate tends to operate as a means for satisfying these interests.

However, as Weber continues, "….very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (Weber 1958, p. 280). So ideas about educational practice do have the power to determine the "tracks" of education and thus are not inconsequential or eliminable. Whether these ideas are understood or not matters. For instance, the American Dream as a motivator might *truly* be driven by selfish ambition to secure more material goods than others. However, the dynamic of interest is set along the tracks of certain ideas, which can be clearly understood: for instance, the ideas of "equality of opportunity," "upward mobility" (cf. Duncan and Murnane 2014), and how educational practice should realize these ends. These ideas are not inconsequential or eliminable because they express demands to educate citizens according to the vision cast by the American Dream. The Weberian educator would echo the demands of the ideas determining the American Dream without ignoring the presence of conflicting ideas.

The Weberian educator's authority should be used to transform the public's conception of educational practice, to provoke the public to clarify and take responsibility for ideas about education that will determine its future. Here the Weberian educator aspires to promote independent thinking about educational practice and warns the public about rushing along particular educational "tracks" based upon the force of a "momentary impression" (Weber 1975, p. 154). In this case, to extend the Weberian educator's authority is to extend the hope that ideas about education can become more significant and more consequential in determining the public's oversight of educational institutions. Here the philosopher of education assuredly finds an important component of his or her calling: to present the understanding sought and conveyed by the educator, and to echo the priority of educational practice as a public "demand of the day."

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